South Suburban Mayors and Managers /
South Council of Mayors

COMPLETE STREETS AND TRAILS PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

DRAFT JUNE 2015

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Regional Context

In January 2015, South Council of Mayors, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), and Active Transportation Alliance staff held an initial team meeting to kick off the South Council of Mayors Complete Streets and Trails Plan. The project was identified by the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) and South Council of Mayors staff as a high priority and crucial element to encourage active transportation and to advance a Complete Streets approach to roadway and transit planning and programming.

SSMMA and the South Council of Mayors have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to planning for all modes of transportation. This commitment is realized, above all, in the Southland's planning and economic development framework, the Green TIME Zone,[1] which establishes a vision for sustainable redevelopment in the southern suburbs and presents strategies through which older communities can leverage the value of their established rail infrastructure and manufacturing capacity into desirable neighborhoods, good jobs, and environmental improvement. Among other key strategies, the framework emphasizes Transit Oriented Development (TOD) hubs, where residents can enjoy convenient, walkable neighborhoods and realize the savings and other benefits of reduced driving.

The Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will update and expand earlier planning efforts, including the 2008 SSMMA Bicycle Plan, to include priority regional corridors, connections to transit, and walkability. The project will also include a review of the South Council of Mayors' current Surface Transportation Program (STP) processes, with an eye toward identifying opportunities for advancing Complete Streets and multimodal transportation. Finally, the project team will conduct outreach activities aimed at identifying 3-4 communities in the South Council of Mayors, who are interested in, and would benefit from, a Complete Streets policy. The project team – with the Active Transportation Alliance taking the lead – will then work closely with these communities to develop and promote adoption of Complete Streets policies.

This existing conditions report is a critical first step in the planning process – laying the groundwork from which recommendations will ultimately be made. To properly address the active transportation needs and challenges in South Council of Mayors, to assess the degree to which Surface Transportation Funds can be leveraged to help create Complete Streets, and to identify communities that are committed to and would benefit the most from Complete Streets policies, it is important to understand the current conditions, the policy context, and the existing programming processes. This knowledge of what is happening "on the ground" and in decision-making bodies, and the understanding of goals for active transportation and Complete Streets in the Council will help member communities to plan for Complete Streets.

Given the large size of the study area (35 communities, 232 square miles) – as well as the project's focus on programming methodology and policy development – this existing conditions report will not provide the level

[1] For more information on the Green TIME Zone, see https://sites.google.com/a/chicagosouthlandedc.org/chicago-southland-economic-development-corporation/green-time-zone.

of detail found in the a study of an individual community. However, it will provide important basic information and critical analysis needed to guide and inform broad planning and policy level recommendations.

The existing conditions report is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction and Regional Context
- Chapter 2: Transportation Infrastructure Overview
- Chapter 3: Surface Transportation Planning Program
- Chapter 4: Looking Forward
- Supplemental Background Information and Maps

1.1 Purpose, Goals, Objectives

The Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will build upon and advance previous efforts by SSMMA, the South Council of Mayors and their partners in the Chicago Southland to cultivate vibrant communities where walking, bicycling, and transit are convenient and popular ways to travel. The project will assist SSMMA and the South Council of Mayors to achieve goals related to access, mobility, health, and sustainability by identifying actions that the Council and member communities can take to improve and enhance active transportation networks. It will identify ways to integrate and increase connections between travel modes, and above all, advance a Complete Streets approach to roadway planning, design, and programming in order to create roads that are safe, convenient and enjoyable for all users regardless of age or ability.

The goals and objectives for the plan have evolved out of previous bicycle planning efforts, as well as from other plans and successful implementation actions, at local, sub-regional, and regional levels. Such efforts have aimed to advance bicycling and walking as transportation and recreation, encourage a Complete Streets approach to roadway planning and design, and foster transit-oriented development. Ideally, realization of these goals will lead to investment and redevelopment in existing communities, capitalizing upon their existing infrastructure and other assets.

The project seeks to promote a Complete Streets approach to transportation planning and programming in the Council and Council communities, to improve conditions for bicycling, walking and transit use, increase access and traffic safety, enhance local businesses, and foster a healthier, more sustainable transportation network throughout the Council area.

To achieve these ***goals***, the three main ***objectives*** of the Complete Streets and Trails Plan project are:

1. To provide an update to the 2008 Bike Plan, incorporating new existing and planned facilities and identifying priority regional bikeway corridors, focusing on connections to transit and “main streets.” This update will also include planning-level recommendations for improving pedestrian conditions and access to transit along the regional corridors.

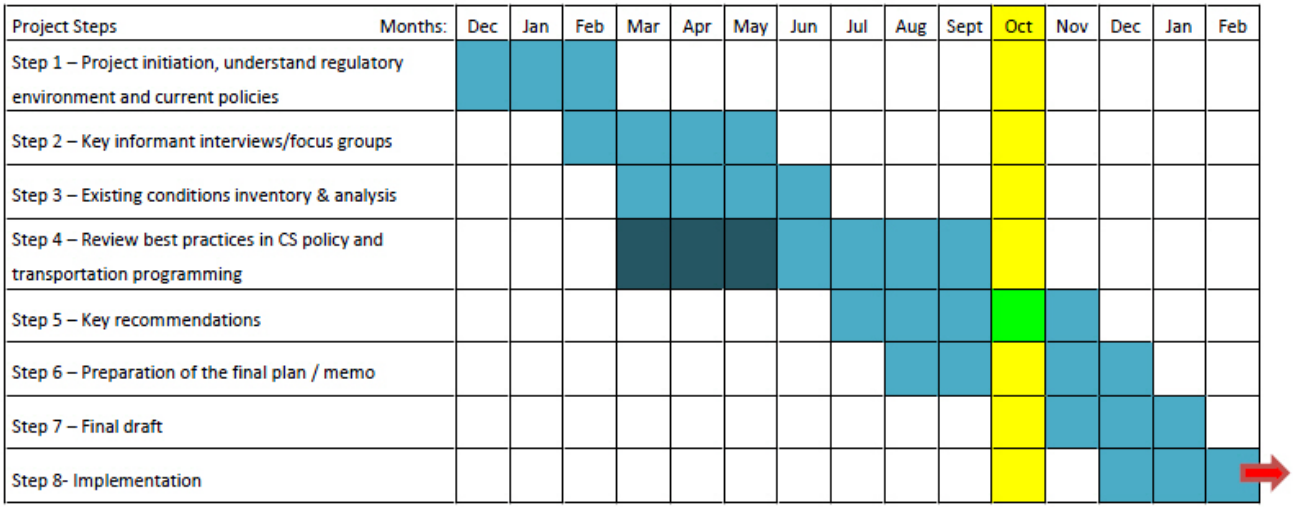
2. To examine current process and methodology at SSMMA/South Council of Mayors for programming STP funds, and provide recommendations for revising methodology to promote Complete Streets approach in SSMMA program development

3. To identify 3-4 communities in the South Council of Mayors where a Complete Streets policy would be desirable, and conduct outreach activities to help them move toward adoption of a Complete Streets policy.

1.2 Planning Process and Next Steps

The planning process to achieve these objectives and create the Complete Streets and Trails Plan includes multiple steps that will last approximately 12 months. The process has been designed to include input from SSMMA and South Council of Mayors staff, member communities of the Council, transit agencies, Forest Preserve districts, and local cycling groups. In October of 2014, CMAP staff and staff from SSMMA/South Council of Mayors developed a final Scope of Work for the project. The scope of work sets program tasks, a basic timeline for the project, and recommends a partnership with the Active Transportation Alliance on developing the final plan report. The scope also recommends oversight and guidance of the project by an advisory group consisting of staff from SSMMA South Council of Mayors, CMAP, and the Active Transportation Alliance. As indicated in Figure 1.1, the first three steps of the project involve an analysis of the existing conditions and practices within the Council using information gathered through a questionnaire and map input, review of previous studies, and collection of data and maps. The results of these steps are presented in this report. Steps 4 through 7 of the process will lead to the draft the plan report and the identification of key steps for implementation, and the final phase will be to review and adopt the plan.

Figure 1.1 Project Timeline



Note: The yellow line and green box highlight the approximate point within the project timeline when the draft key recommendations memo will be produced. The dark teal represents a period of preliminary review and coordination with our partner on the project, Active Transportation Alliance, who will lead the effort to identify and collaborate with 3-4 South Council communities to learn more about policies and actions to advance Complete Streets.

1.3 SSMMA and the South Council of Mayors

Located south of the City of Chicago, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) is an intergovernmental agency or council of governments (COG) providing technical assistance and joint services to 44 municipalities representing a population of over 650,000 in southern Cook and northern Will Counties.[2] SSMMA members work cooperatively on a variety of issues, initiatives, and focus areas including transportation, legislation, land use, economic development, recycling, purchasing, stormwater and open space planning, infrastructure, human resources, public safety and housing issues. The primary mission of the Association is to provide a forum or means by which geographically related municipalities in the area south of Chicago can cooperate to explore and recommend solutions to common municipal problems.

SSMMA houses the South Council of Mayors, one of eleven subregional councils[3] established by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to:

- Provide local input into the metropolitan transportation planning process
- Facilitate communication between local governments and the regional transportation agencies
- Establish the priorities for the local Surface Transportation Program and implement programmed projects

The South Council is composed of 35 municipalities in South Cook and Northeast Will counties. Each Council of Mayors receives an annual allocation of local Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds and is responsible for programming those funds according to its own STP Methodology. Council projects must meet all federal eligibility requirements, including being located on a federal-aid eligible route, and must be sponsored and implemented by a local community within the council. While many other sources of funding exist for local transportation projects (such as Motor Fuel Tax, general revenues, etc.) – and local governments presumably have methods in place for prioritizing the use of all available funds – this project is focused on the South Council's STP programming methodology. The results of our analysis, however, may be applicable to other instances and processes where limited funding resources for transportation projects necessitate prioritization.

Each Council of Mayors is required to have at least one staff person designated as a Planning Liaison (PL). PLs are the primary link between CMAP and the suburban mayors and are directly responsible for ensuring that locally sponsored, federally funded projects are correctly entered and accurately maintained in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) database.[4] PLs are the primary contacts for local agencies and coordinate the implementation of federally funded projects, including STP, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement Program (BRRP), Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS), and Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) projects, with municipalities and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

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[2] For more information on SSMMA and its work, see http://ssmma.org/.
[3] For more information on the subregional Councils, see http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/about/involvement/committees/advisory-committees/council-of-mayors/subregional-councils.
4 The TIP is metropolitan Chicago's agenda of surface transportation projects. The TIP lists all federally funded projects and regionally significant, non-federally funded projects programmed for implementation in the next four years. For more information, see http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/tip.

Figure 1.2 Councils of Mayors

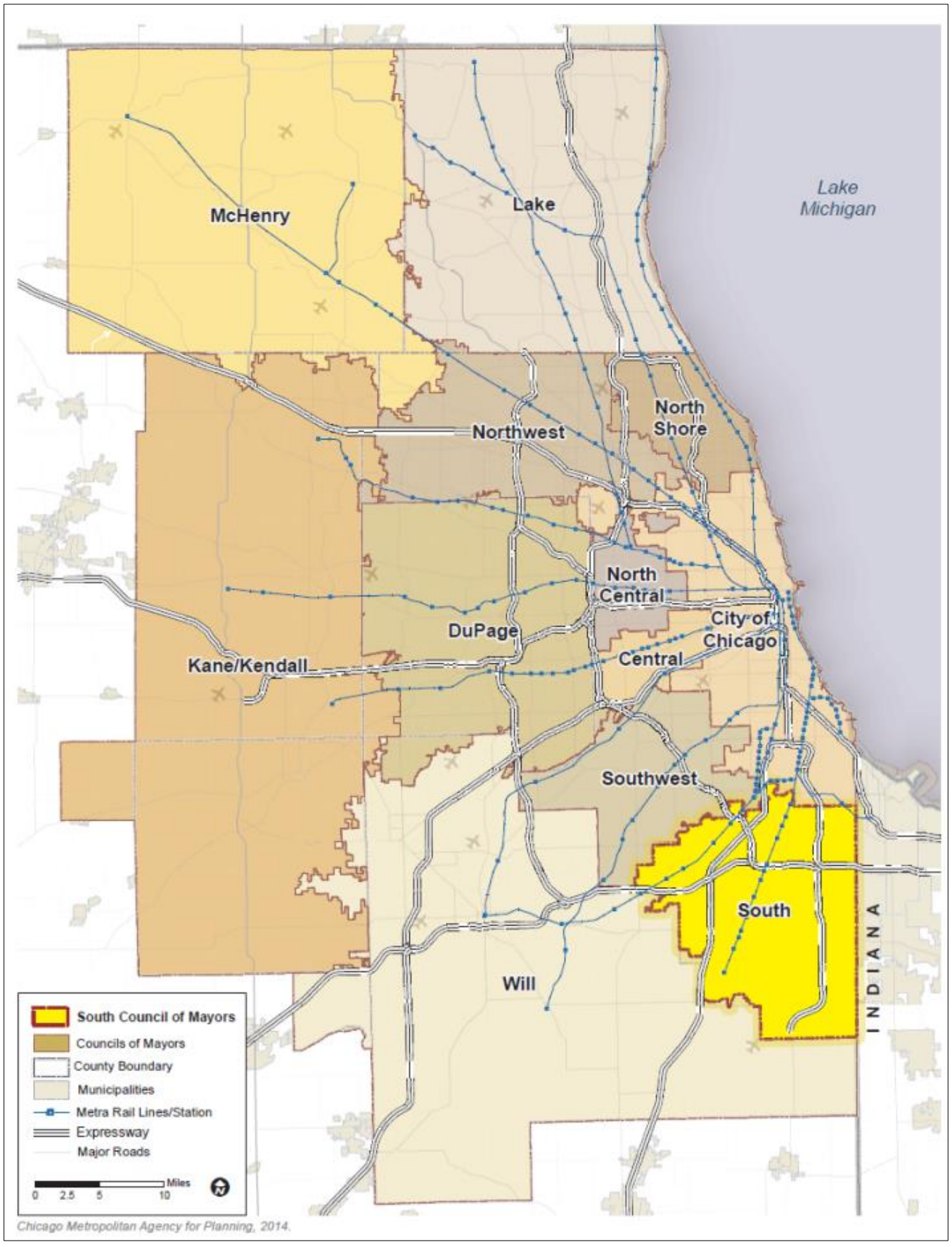
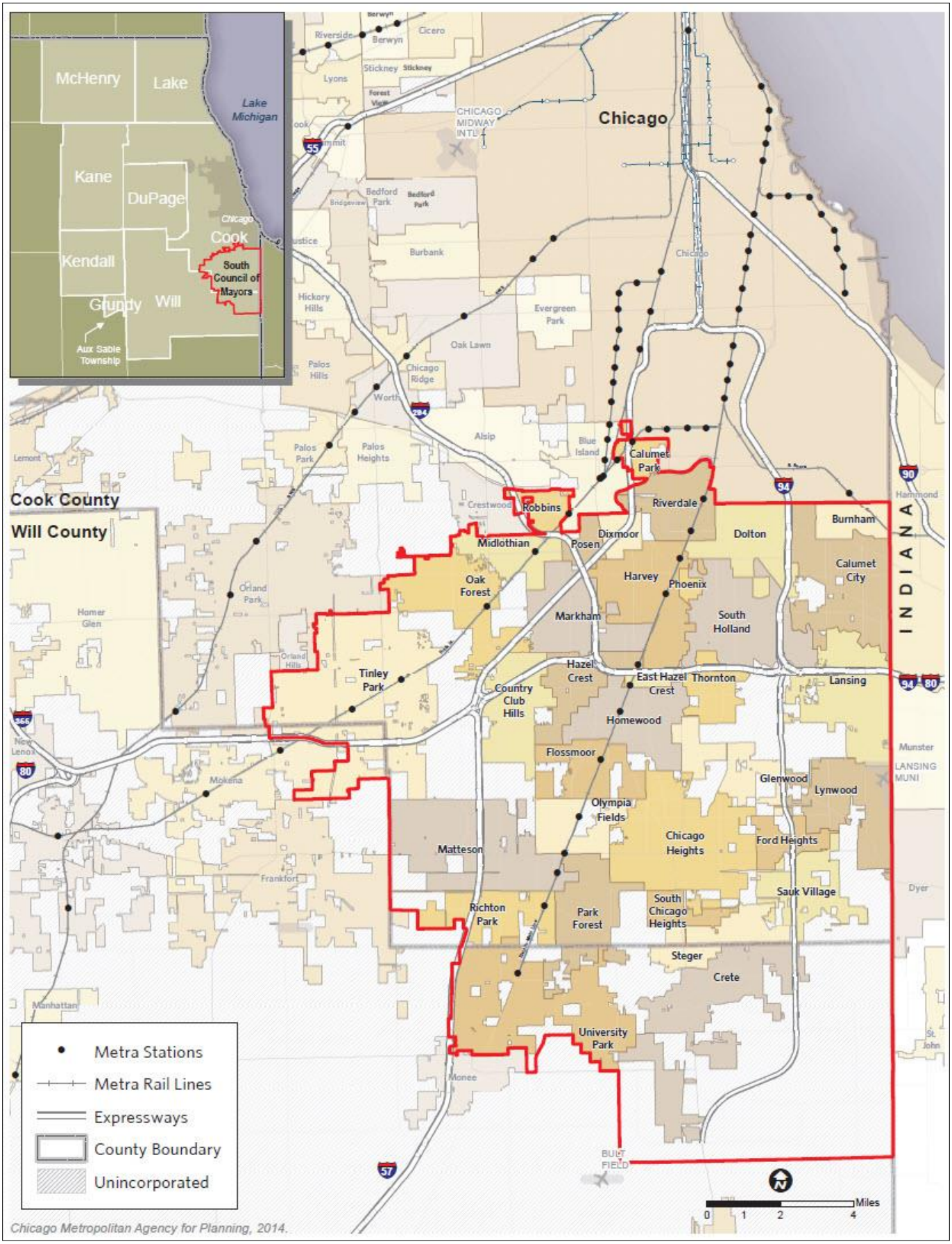


Figure 1.3 South Council of Mayors – Regional Context



1.4 SSMMA / South Council of Mayors and GO TO 2040

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's comprehensive regional plan. To address anticipated population growth of more than 2 million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. The plan contains 4 themes and 12 major recommendation areas:

Livable Communities

1. Achieve Greater Livability through Land Use and Housing
2. Manage and Conserve Water and Energy Resources
3. Expand and Improve Parks and Open Space
4. Promote Sustainable Local Food

Human Capital

5. Improve Education and Workforce Development
6. Support Economic Innovation

Efficient Governance

7. Reform State and Local Tax Policy
8. Improve Access to Information
9. Pursue Coordinated Investments

Regional Mobility

10. Invest Strategically in Transportation
11. Increase Commitment to Public Transit
12. Create a More Efficient Freight Network

GO TO 2040's recommendations in the Livable Communities chapter stress the need for mobility options that include improvements to support walking and bicycling as safe and efficient transportation modes, as well as viable connections to transit options. More broadly, the plan recognizes the need for a modern, efficient transportation system to support the growth, diversity, and prosperity of the region. To help achieve this, the plan recommends policies, actions, and investments to improve conditions for bicycling, walking, and the use of public transportation, including a Complete Streets approach to planning and designing local transportation systems. GO TO 2040 specifically identifies actions for municipal and county governments that support regional mobility, including encouraging a Complete Streets approach to planning and designing local transportation systems. The SSMMA/South Council of Mayors Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will therefore help to implement important goals and recommendations of GO TO 2040.

1.5 Transportation and Livability

Livability, as a planning concept and goal, refers to the overall social and environmental quality of a community, as perceived by residents, workers, and visitors. It is commonly referred to as "quality of life."

Livability is primarily defined and achieved at the local level, reflecting a community's values and priorities on a wide spectrum of issues, including public safety, health, the environment, opportunities for employment, education, social interaction, recreation and cultural activity, and, of course, transportation.

Transportation impacts nearly every aspect of a person's life. Going to work or school, making appointments, running errands, meeting friends, and engaging in recreational activities are all affected by the transportation options that are available to us. Transportation can also affect the environment we live in: the quality of the air we breathe, the noise levels we experience, and the quantity and quality of our drinking water. It can also affect our safety, security, and health. In addition to community livability, transportation and the massive infrastructure needed to support it directly affect how our communities look, function, and feel.

The potential for transportation to enhance and improve livability is substantial. The quality, location, and type of transportation facilities and services available to a community significantly affect its ability to advance and achieve broader livability objectives, such as access to jobs, affordable housing, high quality schools, good health, a vibrant economy, environmental health, and safe streets. The Federal Highway Administration, in its Livability in Transportation Guidebook, indicates that achieving livability in transportation involves:

> *...addressing road safety and capacity issues through better planning and design, maximizing and expanding new technologies such as intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and quiet pavements, and using travel demand management (TDM) approaches in system planning and operations. It also includes developing high quality public transportation to foster economic development, and community design that offers residents and workers the full range of transportation choices. And, it involves strategically connecting the modal pieces—bikeways, pedestrian facilities, transit services, and roadways—into a truly intermodal, interconnected system.*

At the local level, streets and streetscapes that are safe, attractive, and designed to accommodate all travel modes – particularly walking – are a key element in livable communities. Such streets can improve and enhance the experience of using public transportation, which typically begins and ends with a walking trip. Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets also help promote social interaction and community cohesion by creating more opportunities for residents to interact and form relationships that build community and promote civic engagement. Promoting active transportation can improve the health of community residents and lower their transportation costs, which are often the second largest household expense, after housing. Safety—one of the most important goals for communities, transportation engineers and planners—is enhanced when streets are designed to accommodate all users.

GO TO 2040 explicitly recognizes that providing more transportation choices to residents is a vital component of livability. When asked what makes a community livable, residents in our region – and around the country – consistently point to certain elements, including health, safety, and walkability. They characterize livable communities as those offering transportation choices that provide timely access to schools, jobs, services, and basic needs; those that are broadly accessible for people of all ages and abilities and allow safe, convenient travel by multiple transportation modes.

1.6 Complete Streets

Source: National Complete Streets Coalition Flickr

Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that requires roadways to be designed, operated, and maintained to enable all users to travel safely, conveniently, and comfortably regardless of their mode of transportation, age, or physical abilities. This approach corrects decades of practice in which planners and engineers designed streets primarily for automobiles and for motor vehicle mobility. A Complete Streets approach offers a new paradigm by redefining the basic problem that transportation planners and engineers are asked to address: the problem to be solved is no longer how to move cars at the highest safe speed, but rather how to provide safe and convenient access and mobility for all anticipated users. The Complete Streets approach seeks to balance the needs of all the users and to provide for safe travel by all modes. Complete Streets is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach to roadway design. It is context sensitive – finding solutions that accommodate all anticipated users, while at the same time responding to surrounding land use, local community goals, and other local conditions.[5]

In addition to the State of Illinois, three county and twenty municipal governments in our region have formally adopted policies supporting Complete Streets (as of May 2015).[6] The State passed its Complete Streets law (Public Act 095-0665) in October 2007, becoming the first state in the nation to create such a statute. The state law requires the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to "incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into state highway projects in urbanized areas."

Cook County's Complete Streets Ordinance was passed in 2011, which formalized an internal policy in place since 2009. The ordinance directs the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways "to plan, design, operate and maintain the entire right-of-way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation in all appropriate transportation projects, including new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, widening, and operations." The ordinance stipulates specific actions to further this goal, related to funding decisions, design processes, and performance measurements.

Municipal policies can take the form of an ordinance, a resolution, a plan, a municipal or departmental policy, an executive order, or design guidelines. At present, four municipalities in the South Council of Mayors

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5 For more information on Complete Streets, including history of the concept, see CMAP's Complete Streets Toolkit at http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/local-ordinances-toolkits/complete-streets.

6 This information is *per* the National Complete Streets Coalition "Chart of all Complete Streets Policies" at http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/changing-policy/complete-streets-atlas.

jurisdiction have adopted Complete Streets policies: Tinley Park, Chicago Heights, Riverdale, and Park Forest. Nearby, the City of Blue Island passed a Complete Streets ordinance in 2011.

Complete Streets can benefit residents and communities, regardless of size or location, in very specific ways. Cost savings in a walkable neighborhood accrue to residents as well as local governments. More time spent walking or biking has enormous health benefits. Studies have found that children who walk or cycle to school "perform measurably better on tasks demanding concentration."[7]

Recent opinion polls found that 66 percent of Americans want more transportation options, yet 73 percent feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.[8] Many of our streets are incomplete, offering mediocre conditions for people walking, biking, or using transit—meaning many people really do not have the choice but to drive. Changing policy so that our transportation system routinely includes the needs of pedestrians, transit users, or bicyclists will give people of all ages and abilities more options when traveling.[9]

Complete Streets make economic sense. A balanced transportation system that includes complete streets can bolster economic growth and stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations.

Complete Streets improve safety by reducing crashes through safety improvements. One study[10] found that designing for pedestrian travel by installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduced pedestrian risk by 28%.

Complete Streets encourage more walking and bicycling. Public health experts are encouraging walking and bicycling as a response to the obesity epidemic, and complete streets can help. One study found that 43 percent of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27 percent of those without safe places to walk were active enough.[11]

Complete Streets can help ease congestion. Streets that provide travel choices can give people the option to avoid traffic jams, and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network. Several smaller cities have adopted complete streets policies as one strategy to increase the overall capacity of their transportation network and reduce congestion.

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[7] Goodyear, Sarah. "The Link Between Kids Who Walk or Bike to School and Concentration." The Atlantic Cities. Feb 5, 2013. http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2013/02/kids-who-walk-or-bike-school-concentrate-better-study-shows/4585/ Accessed: 3/21/14.
[8] Future of Transportation survey, Transportation for America
[9] For more information on the benefits of Complete Streets, see the National Complete Streets Coalition Fact Sheets on benefits at http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets, from which the following text was taken. Also see CMAP's "Complete Streets Toolkit – The Basics," at http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/local-ordinances-toolkits/complete-streets.
[10] King, M., Carnegie, J. & Ewing, R. (2003). "Pedestrian Safety Through a Raised Median and Redesigned Intersections." *Transportation Research Board 1828 (2003): 56-66.*
[11] Powell, K.E., Martin, L., & Chowdhury, P.P. (2003). "Places to walk: convenience and regular physical activity." American Journal of Public Health, 93, 1519-1521.

Complete Streets help children. Streets that provide room for bicycling and walking help children get physical activity and gain independence. More children walk to school where there are sidewalks, and children who have and use safe walking and bicycling routes have a more positive view of their neighborhood. Safe Routes to School programs, gaining in popularity across the country, will benefit from complete streets policies that help turn all routes into safe routes.

Complete streets improve air quality. Poor air quality in our urban areas is linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses. Yet if each resident of an American community of 100,000 replaced one car trip with one bike trip just once a month, it would cut carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 3,764 tons of per year in the community.[12] Complete streets allow this to happen more easily.

Complete Streets make fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later. Jeff Morales, former Director of Caltrans, said, "by fully considering the needs of all non-motorized travelers (pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) early in the life of a project, the costs associated with including facilities for these travelers are minimized."

This project will help advance Complete Streets in the South Council by identifying and prioritizing corridors or routes where multimodal transportation investments are most needed, by examining opportunities for leveraging STP funds to contribute to infrastructure and projects that help realize Complete Streets, and by working directly with a number of municipalities in the South Council to develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy.

[12] League of American Bicyclists, National Bike Month Study, 2001. Referenced in League of American Bicyclists E-Newsletter (May 1, 2001), at http://lists.topica.com/lists/vbf/read/message.html?sort=t&mid=703031769.

Chapter 2: Transportation Infrastructure Overview

The communities that comprise the South Council of Mayors were developed over the course of the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries with two distinct, and at times overlapping, identities. On the one hand, towns and villages functioned largely as residential communities connected to downtown Chicago and its jobs by the region's commuter rail system. On the other hand, much of the Southland was defined by large-scale industrial and manufacturing facilities strategically located in an area where so many of the region's – and the nation's – freight rail lines converged.

These two identities endured through the economic hard times of the second half of the 20th century when many residents and businesses left the Southland for rapidly growing new suburbs, and the rail-oriented industrial and manufacturing economy began to decline. These identities are preserved in the transportation infrastructure that connects the Southland communities to each other, to the City of Chicago, and to points beyond. Transportation infrastructure represents an important asset and opportunity for the Southland. By fully supporting all travel modes, the Southland can take advantage of emerging development trends and industries such as transit-oriented development, logistics, and green manufacturing. A multi-layered transportation system will contribute substantially to the realization of a prosperous and sustainable future through improved access to transit and job centers, increased safety, better health, and more livable communities. Adopting and implementing a Complete Streets approach to planning and programming projects will help SSMMA and South Council communities leverage existing transportation infrastructure to achieve long-term economic development goals.

2.1 Overview

The South Council of Mayors is bordered on the north by the City of Chicago and the Calumet area waterways, and on the east by the Illinois-Indiana border. The Council area extends south into Will County, where it includes the Villages of Crete and University Park. The Council extends as far west as the Village of Tinley Park, as well as a substantial amount of unincorporated land in the southeast part of the Council. The Council area is approximately 232 square miles (approximately 20 miles north to south and 17 miles east to west), with an estimated total population of 523,660.

Interstates 57 and 94 connect the South Council to downtown Chicago, Kankakee and Champaign-Urbana, and east to Indiana and Michigan. Interstate 80 runs east-west across the northern half of the Council, connecting to Interstate 355, the City of Joliet, and Interstate 55 (to the west) and to Indiana to the east. Illinois Route 394, constructed and operated as an urban freeway, extends south at the interchange of Interstates 94 and 80, to the southern border of the Council, where it merges with Illinois Route 1, in the Village of Crete.

The expressway network is extraordinarily dense in the northern part of the Council area, where the intersections of I-57, I-294, and I-80 form a triangle, containing a large part of the Village of Markham, which is roughly 4.5 square miles in area. This nexus of interstate expressways, combined with I-94/80 and Illinois Route 394 to the east, connects the Council with all parts of the greater metropolitan region. A new

interchange between I-294 and I-57 is currently being constructed. Phase 1 of this project, which represents a joint effort of the Illinois Tollway and IDOT and is one of the region's major transportation projects, was completed in 2014. Phase 2 is scheduled to be constructed in 2023-24.[13]

Major east-west arterials crossing the Council include:

- Illinois Route 83 (147th Street / Sibley Boulevard)
- U.S. Highway 6 (159th Street / 162nd Street)
- 167th Street (east of Interstate 294)
- Vollmer Road (between the Metra Electric line and Illinois Route 43 / Harlem Avenue)
- U.S. Highway 30 / Lincoln Highway
- Sauk Trail Road

Major north-south arterials crossing the Council include:

- Illinois Route 83 (Torrence Avenue)
- Illinois Route 1 (Halsted Street)
- Western Avenue / Dixie Highway
- Kedzie Avenue
- Pulaski Road / Crawford Avenue
- Illinois Route (Cicero Avenue)
- Illinois Route 43 (Harlem Avenue)
- Illinois Route 45 (La Grange Road)

Two Metra rail lines run through the Council area and connect member communities along the lines to each other and to downtown Chicago: the Metra Electric District, running from Chicago to University Park, with 14 stations within Council boundaries; and the Rock Island District, running from Chicago to Joliet, with 5 stations in Council boundaries. In addition, North Indiana Commuter Transit District's South Shore line crosses the far northeast corner of the Council, with the Hegewisch station just outside Council boundary.

While Metra serves the western half of the Council well, the eastern half lacks direct service. A SouthEast Service line has been proposed, which would enter the Council at Dolton, with proposed stations at Dolton, South Holland, Thornton, Glenwood, Chicago Heights, South Chicago Heights, Steger, and Crete, and terminate in Balmoral Park.[14] This route is proposed but not included as a fiscally constrained major capital project in GO TO 2040, meaning that funding for its construction has not been identified. At present, and for the near to mid-term future, Metra does not anticipate construction of this line.

[13] For additional information on this project, see http://www.illinoistollway.com/documents/10157/4472151/2014+294-57+ProjectOverview_FactSheet.pdf.
[14] It should be noted that Metra studies estimating demand for rail service in the Southeast Service corridor indicate that the proposed line is not, at present, feasible. For more information, see http://metraconnects.metrarail.com/ses.php.

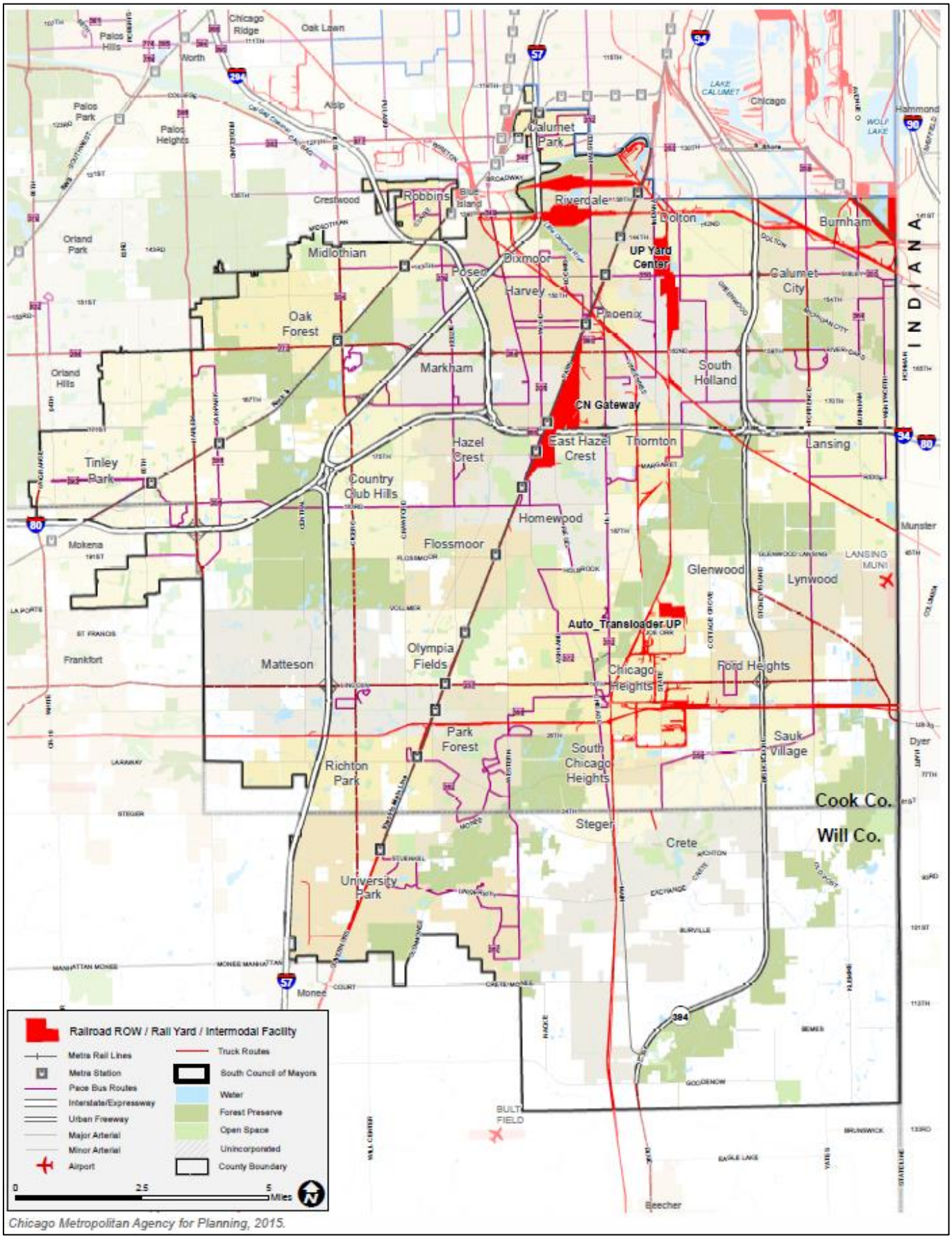
Twenty-four Pace Suburban Bus routes serve the Council area. Thirteen of these routes run primarily within Council Boundaries. The remaining eleven routes connect areas within the South Council to points north (City of Chicago) and northwest (southwestern and western suburbs in Cook and DuPage Counties). Routes are concentrated in the north-central and northeast parts of the Council – and to a lesser extent in the City of Chicago Heights – though routes do reach all 35 member communities. Communities with the most routes include the following (with number of routes in the individual community given in parentheses):

- Burnham (3)
- Calumet City (5)
- Calumet Park (4)
- Chicago Heights (6)
- Dixmoor (4)
- Dolton (3)
- Harvey (11)
- Homewood (7)
- Markham (7)
- Midlothian (5)
- Oak Forest (5)
- Posen (7)
- Riverdale (5)
- Robbins (4)
- South Holland (5)
- Tinley Park (5)

In addition to roadway and transit infrastructure, the South Council of Mayors area is home to a large number of freight-related facilities. While these facilities provide opportunities for economic development, their size and associated truck activity can also create barriers to walking and bicycling. Railroad right-of-way (ROW), including tracks, rail yards, and intermodal facilities, constitute approximately 3,000 acres of land within the South Council of Mayors.

The following sections provide more information on bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure and safety in the South Council study area.

Figure 2.1 Freight-Related Infrastructure



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

2.2 Key Findings

- Since the 2008 SSMMA Bicycle Plan was published, significant progress has been made in completing the regional trail network. The majority of this “backbone” trail network is located on Forest Preserve properties, and within former rail lines or utility ROWs.
- East-west bicycling routes connecting communities – with the exception of the Old Plank Road Trail – are lacking in most parts of the South Council area.
- The Southland is fortunate in having several active bicycle clubs and riding groups that organize and promote bicycling through rides and other events, as well as educational and encouragement programs. Active Transportation Alliance has worked with many south suburban communities and created a foundation for increased cycling, walking, and transit usage.
- Most member communities are classified as “car-dependent” by Walkscore.com. Local challenges to a safe and connected walking and bicycling network include: a large number of limited-access highways, a dense network of high-volume arterial roads, numerous rail lines, large industrial and manufacturing zones, high truck volumes, expansive Forest Preserve properties bordered by roads lacking sidewalks, and multiple waterways.
- The percentage of households with no vehicle available in the South Council is 8.8% – higher than suburban Cook County (7.4%), the collar counties (4.1%), and the region as a whole, minus the City of Chicago (5.6%). In ten South Council communities, 10% or more of the households do not have access to an automobile, and in three communities (Ford Heights, Harvey, and Robbins), over 20% of the households do not own a car.
- Poverty and obesity rates, as well as other health indicators, which could be positively impacted by more active transportation and lifestyles, appear to be significantly higher in many South Council communities than in suburban Cook County and the region as a whole.
- Metra Commuter Rail serves the western half of the South Council area. Although most Metra stations are designed to be accessed primarily by car, some are integrated into the community and provide better access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Pace suburban bus provides fixed-route and paratransit service throughout the South Council area.
- Metra Commuter Rail serves the western half of the South Council area. Although most Metra stations are designed to be accessed primarily by car, some are integrated into the community and provide better access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Pace suburban bus provides fixed-route and paratransit service throughout the South Council area.
- Safety for all types of roadway users varies throughout the South Council area. Harvey and Chicago Heights stand out as areas with high numbers of crashes across all modes.

2.3 Bicycling

2.3.1 2008 SSMMA Bicycle Plan – Implementation Update

SSMMA and the South Council produced their first bicycle plan in 2001. This plan was updated in 2008 by the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation. The 2008 South Suburban Bicycle Plan identified a proposed bicycle network

anchored by a regional trail network, envisioned as complete, together with a practice/policy of routine accommodation of cycling in major local, county, and state resurfacing and reconstruction projects. The 2008 plan extended to areas outside the South Council of Mayors, especially to the northwest, which is under the jurisdiction of the Southwest Council of Mayors. The plan map specified existing and planned bikeways as:

1. Regional trail network routes (completed and incomplete)
2. Local trails (completed and future)
3. On-street bike lanes or marked shared lanes (existing and recommended)
4. Signed on-street routes (recommended, for “major streets” and “local streets”)

The plan grouped its recommendations under three broad goals:

- To fully leverage the economic, wellness and environmental opportunities of a completed regional trail network
- To provide communities with a flexible, resilient and accessible transportation system
- To encourage its residents to bicycle for transportation, recreation and good health

The 2008 plan makes the following high-priority recommendations, based on these goals and on feasibility for implementation:

1. Complete the regional trail network – Close the remaining gaps in the Burnham Greenway, Plank Road Trail, Calumet-Sag Trail, Lincoln Oasis/Thorn Creek Trail and Tinley Creek Trail.
2. Sign the bicycle network – Focus first on travel between the regional trail network and nearby retail, amenities, attractions and population centers, and secondly on the remaining on-street network.
3. Create the on-street network – Capitalize on local, state and county road maintenance and construction schedules to maximize best-practice opportunities and cost efficiencies.

The plan expands on these core recommendations by offering the following prioritized network recommendations. An update or notes on the status of each recommendation is given below. Overall, it appears that progress on the first recommendation – to complete the regional trial network – has significantly outpaced the recommendations for the creation of on-street facilities. However, a few communities have created signed bike routes and installed on-street bikeways.

Figure 2.2 2008 SSMMA Bicycle Plan

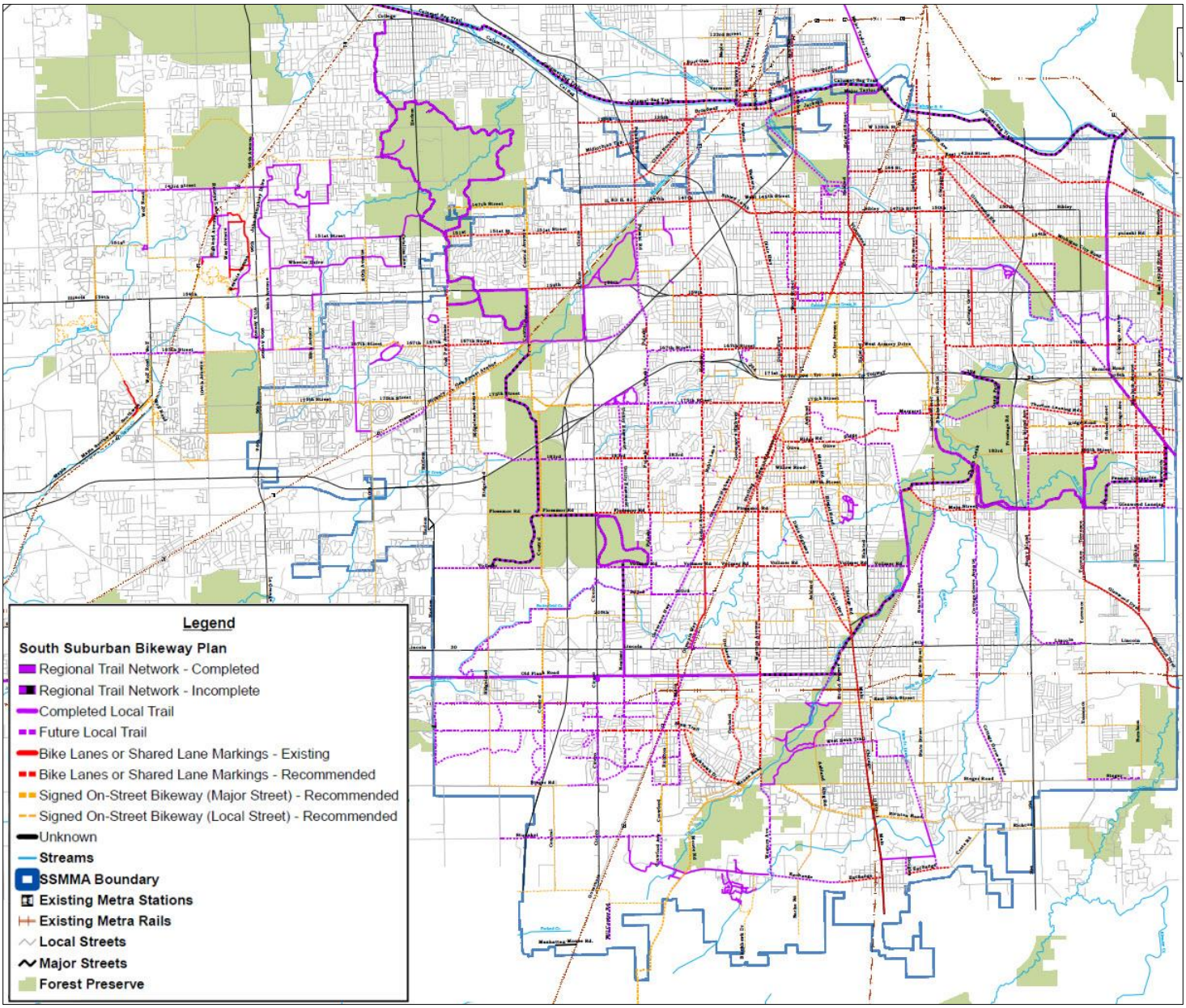
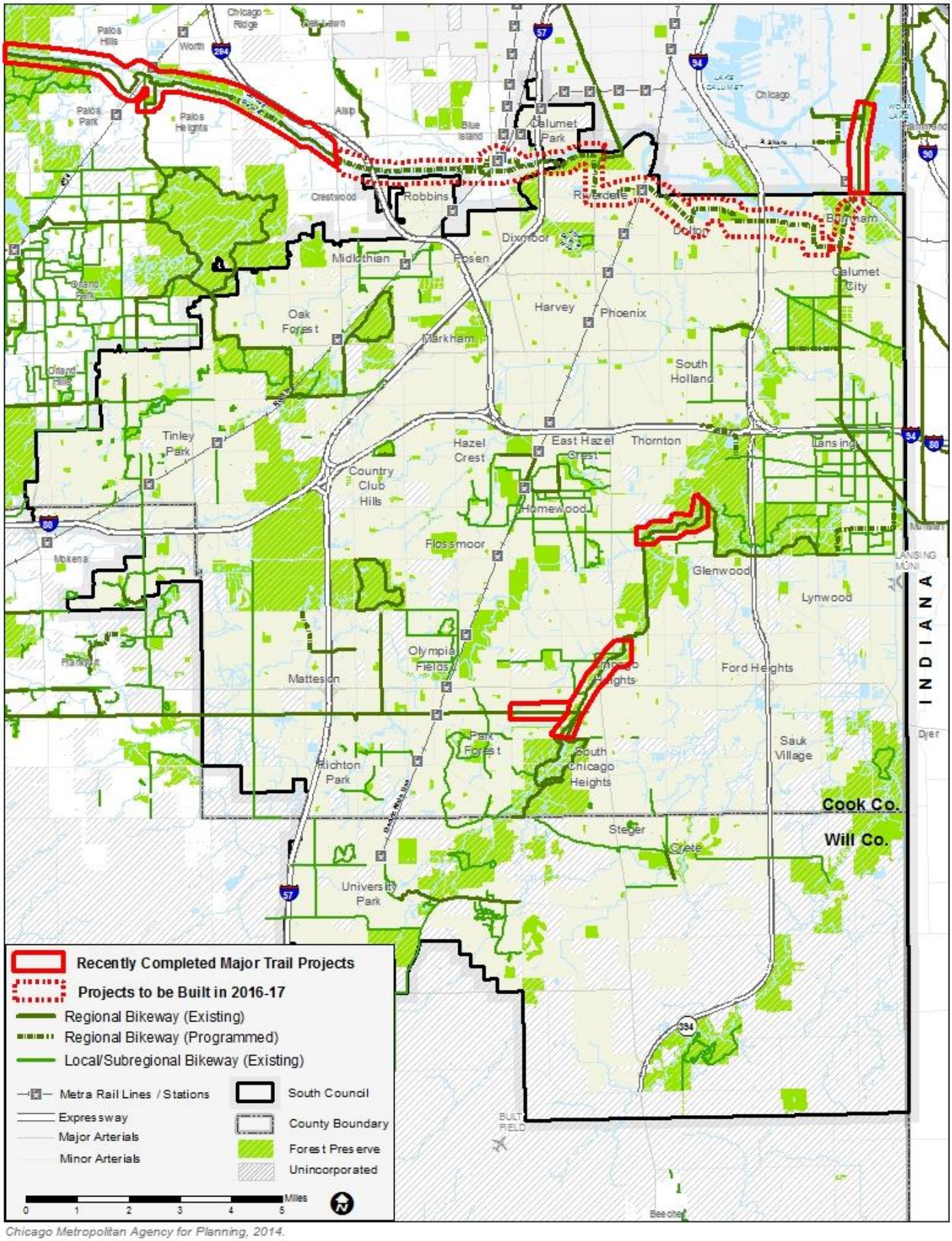
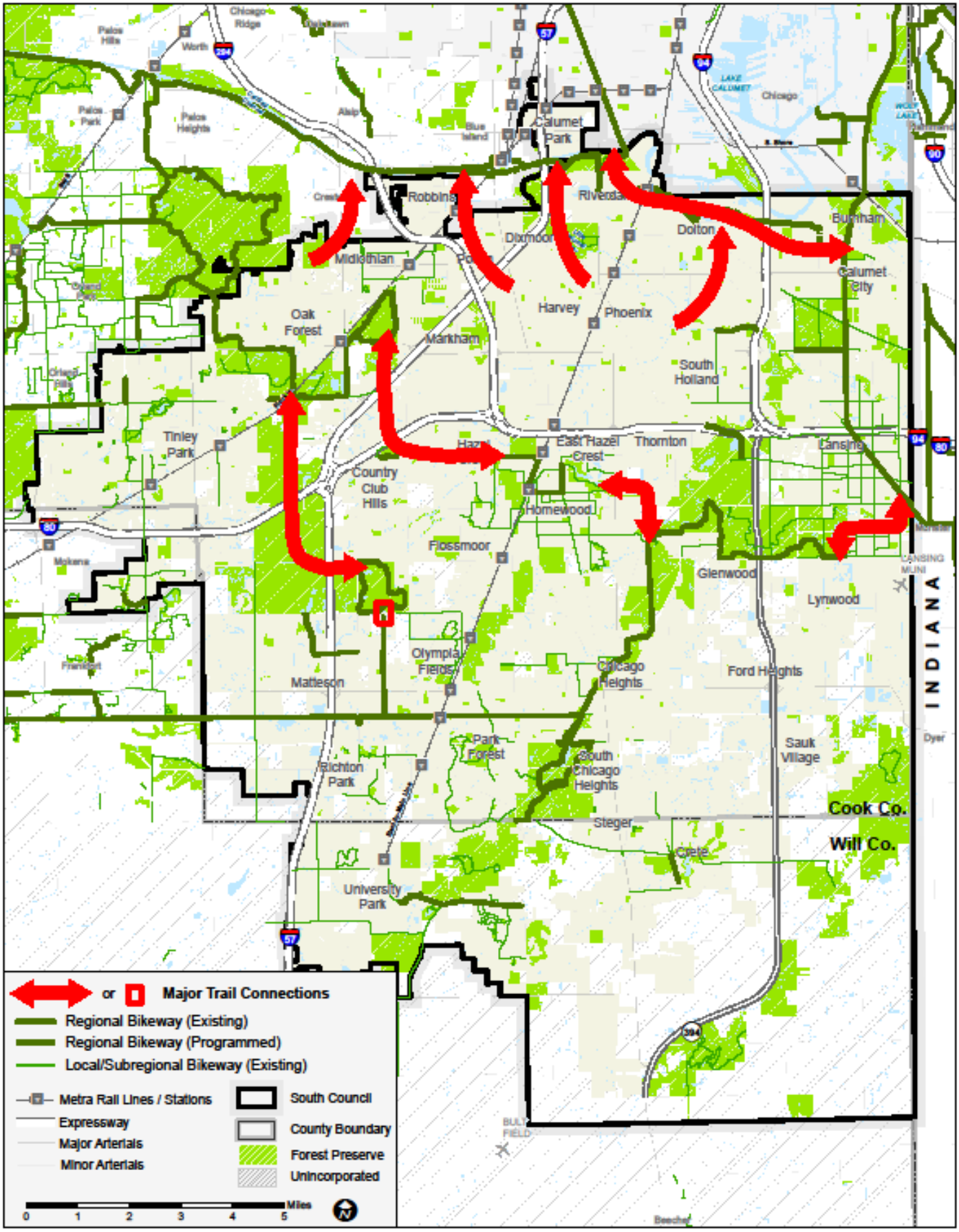


Figure 2.3: Major Trail Segments Completed since 2008



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

Figure 2.4: Important Regional Trail Connections



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

1. Complete the regional trail network

- Close the Burnham Greenway gap, Burnham, Ill.

  The Burnham Greenway gap – approximately 2.87 miles in length – still exists. The gap is located between the current southern terminus of the northern segment of the Burnham Greenway Trail at South Avenue O near Wolf Lake Boulevard in Chicago and the northern terminus of the southern segment at State Street near Alice Avenue on the border of the Village of Burnham and Calumet City.

  Since 2008, there has been considerable progress made toward completing this gap. For the purposes of design engineering and construction, the gap has been divided into two distinct projects. The northern segment, which extends from Avenue O south to Brainard Avenue, received ITEP funding in 2010 and was on the April 2015 IDOT letting[15] for construction. However, no bids were submitted and it will need to be let again; if one or more bids are received at the next letting, then it could be constructed this year. The sponsor of this segment is IDNR.

  The southern segment extends from Brainard Avenue south to State Street in the Village of Burnham. The project has received both ITEP and CMAQ funding. The segment involves the construction of two bridges over multiple rail lines and a third bridge over the Grand Calumet River. Engineering has been completed and the project is scheduled to be let for construction in late 2015 or early 2016.

- Finish the Old Plank Road Trail, Chicago Heights, IL

  This project was let in April 2015 and is currently under construction.

- Construct the Calumet-Sag Trail

  This project has advanced considerably since 2008. The trail, which stretches for nearly approximately 25 miles along the Cal Sag Canal, has been divided into two major (and several minor) segments or phases for the purposes of design, engineering, funding, and construction. The western segment runs from Illinois Route 83 near Lemont to Illinois Route 50 (Cicero Avenue) in Alsip. This completed segment opened in early June 2015. The eastern segment, which connects to the Burnham Greenway, has been divided into several sub-segments, which are planned for construction in 2016 to 2018.

- Establish bicycle access to the Southland Lincoln Oasis, South Holland/Thornton, IL

  No significant progress has been made on this recommendation.

  There is a planned facility in CMAP's Regional Greenways and Trails Plan, which extends from the Little Calumet River and connects to the Cook County Forest Preserve's existing Thorn Creek Trail. Included in the proposal is a connection from the trail to the Tollway Oasis. This connection from Thornton Road, under the expressway and across Thorn Creek, is also shown in the Village of Glenwood Bicycle Plan (programmed) and in the 2008 SSMMA South Suburban Bicycle Plan (planned).

[15] A letting is the process of providing notice, issuing and receiving proposals or invitations to bid, and awarding contracts. It is an important part of the procurement process, allowing IDOT to announce and contractors to bid on construction projects. Lettings are announced in the Transportation Bulletin, available online at http://www.idot.illinois.gov/doing-business/procurements/construction-services/construction-bulletins/transportation-bulletin/index.

In addition, planned facilities on local roads near the Oasis (both north and south of I-80) are shown in the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan and the 2008 SSMMA plan.

- Complete the Tinley Creek south extension, Tinley Park, IL

  No significant progress has been made on this recommendation.

  The Forest Preserve District of Cook County released a Trail Master Plan & Policy in 2014, which included the recommendation to "Complete priority trails in the CMAP 2009 Greenways and Trails Plan, including improving the Des Plaines River Trail, Tinley Creek Trail, and extension of the Centennial Trail." (p. 10). The extension would connect the existing trail network in Burr Oak Woods, Rubio Woods, Midlothian Meadows, and St. Mihiel Reservation, through Yankee Woods and Bartel Grassland. If completed, this would create a connection all the way from to the newly developed western segment of the Cal-Sag Trail in Palos Heights to the Old Plank Road Trail in Matteson. This project involves crossing both I-57 and I-80.

- Seek partnerships with economic development and tourism efforts, businesses and foundations to accelerate network completion and promote its use.

  SSMMA staff reports the following: "Since the 2008 report, SSMMA has partnered with many regional organizations as well as our own Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation and the Chicago Southland Convention and visitors Bureau to promote the use of our regional trails. SSMMA has assisted in accessing millions of dollars in federal, state and local funds to expand the network. SSMMA is a founding member of the Millennium Reserve Steering Committee, which actively promotes open space, recreational and economic development efforts in our region and the south side of the City of Chicago."[16]

2. Sign the regional bicycle network

Figure 2.5 Signed Bike Route on 149th St. in the Village of Midlothian

- Sign bike-accessible routes to and from the regional trail network and nearby [< 3 miles] population centers, transit locations, business districts, schools, attractions and other trails
- Sign existing on-street routes including those recommended by this plan as "Signed Only"
- Sign the on-street network recommended in this plan for shared lanes or dedicated bike lanes as these facilities become available

  This recommendation does not appear to have been widely implemented, with the following exceptions:

[16] More information on the Millennium Reserve can be found at http://www.millenniumreserve.org/.

- In April 2015, Calumet City authorized 30 bike route signs, including signs directing cyclists to the Burnham Greenway. These signs are to be paid for with Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) funds.
- Tinley Park has installed signage and bike lanes along Oak Park Avenue.[17] They also finished a Complete Streets project along 167th St., between Harlem and 84th Avenues, which included bikeway signage, as well regulatory signage with the message, "Share the Road."
- The Village of Homewood, which created its first bike plan in 2007, has installed "over 75 bike route signs denoting destinations, attractions, parks and places of interest."
- Olympia Fields recently marked and signed 207th St/Scott Road between Governors Highway and Olympian Way as shared use lanes.
- Midlothian has installed bikeway signs along its Bike Loop.
- Park Forest has installed signage along an on-street bike lane on Orchard Drive.

Other communities, such as the Village of Lansing have designated bicycle routes, though they do not appear to have installed any signage. Such on-street routes typically run along low-volume, low-speed roadways where bicyclists and motorists can safely share the road and may not require signage. While not required, both signage and pavement markings (such as 'sharrows') help cyclists navigate roadways safely and increase driver awareness of cyclists and other roadway users.

3. Implement on-street bicycle facilities & separated side paths

- Routinely incorporate the on-street bicycle facility and sidepath recommendations of this plan into major local, county, and state resurfacing and reconstruction projects
- Follow established guidance in the selection and design of the appropriate facility, including the AASHTO Bicycle Facilities Design Guide [1999 or later], the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices [July 2008 or later], and the FHWA Bicycle Lane Design Guide
- Adjust Surface Transportation Program project scoring to reflect the prioritization of projects incorporating on-street bicycle accommodations
- Promote and pursue road diets - the subtraction of motor vehicle lanes to gain space for dedicated bike lanes and turn lanes - where appropriate [ADT < 18,000] as a strategy for traffic calming and bicycle accommodation on multi-lane roadways

Figure 2.6 Bike Lane on Kedzie Avenue in the Village of Olympia Fields

[17] This project appears to have been funded by SSMMA/South Council with STP funds.

- Target for stand-alone projects streets that provide the most direct connections between a regional trail system and population centers, businesses and other important destinations

  While not widely implemented, some South Council communities have made progress on this recommendation.

  - Homewood has installed bike lanes and sharrows markings on roadways, including the Dixie Highway, Park Avenue, Ashland Avenue, and Ridge Road.

Figure 2.7 Sharrows on Ridge Road in the Village of Homewood

  - Richton Park has implemented bike lanes on Imperial and Latonia Roads and Poplar Avenue – the latter appears to be a combination parking-bike lane.
  - Tinley Park redesigned 167th Street to be a Complete Street, including facilities for bicyclists (bike lanes and marked shared lanes) and pedestrians (sidewalks).
  - Park Forest has striped bike lanes along Orchard Drive.
  - Olympia Fields has installed bike lanes and sharrows markings on Kedzie Avenue, and bike lanes and a sidepath along Olympian Way.
  - The Village of South Holland has implemented bike lanes along 170th St. and along Cottage Grove Avenue.

  Some of the same – as well as other – communities in the South Council of Mayors have also constructed or are planning to construct sidepaths. These include:

  - Park Forest – Applied to CMAQ program for a sidepath along Western Avenue, from the Old Plank Road Trail to the Thorn Creek Trail (at Steger Road).
  - Calumet City – Applied for and was awarded ITEP funds for a sidepath along Torrence Avenue from 159th St. to Michigan City Road.
  - University Park – Applied for and was awarded ITEP funds for a sidepath along University Parkway

Figure 2.7 Sidepath along 203rd St in the Village of Olympia Fields

from Western Avenue to Steger-Monee Road.

- Riverdale – Applied for and was awarded ITEP funds for a segment of the Cal-Sag Trail from Halsted and Forestview Avenue to Indiana Avenue and 138th St. that includes a sidepath as well as an on-street bike lane.
- Olympia Fields – Applied for and was awarded ITEP funds for a sidepath along Vollmer Road between Kedzie and Crawford Avenues.
- South Holland constructed a sidepath along 170th Street.
- Sauk Village submitted a 2016-20 CMAQ/TAP application for a sidepath along Cottage Grove to Sauk Trail and along Sauk Trail to Prairie Avenue (connecting Bloom Trail High School and the commercial area east of Illinois Route 394). The project has been recommended for funding.

Municipalities that have completed bicycle or active transportation plans – or have included a substantial bicycle element in a comprehensive or other type of plan – since the 2008 South Suburban Bicycle Plan include:

- Calumet City – Comprehensive Plan (2014). The bicycle and pedestrian element can be found on pages 89-94.
- Chicago Heights – Active Transportation Plan (2012) *Note: Chicago Heights also has a Comprehensive Plan, created through the LTA program and adopted in May 2015.*
- Dolton – Comprehensive Plan (2013). This plan references (p. 6-6) the "Proposed Bike Plan" map from the Dolton Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012).
- Glenwood – Comprehensive Plan (2011). This plan includes (p. 5-3) a "Map of the parks and trials in the Village of Glenview" that includes proposed bike paths/trails. [external link]
- Homewood – Bicycle Plan (2007) *Note: this plan was completed before the adoption of the 2008 SSMMA plan, though implementation actions would have been subsequent to the preparation and release of the SSMMA plan.*
- Lan-Oak Park District Bicycle Plan (2009) *Note: The Village of Lansing also has a Comprehensive Plan, created through the LTA program and adopted in July 2014.*
- Lynwood Comprehensive Plan (2014). The bicycle and pedestrian element can be found on pages 25 and 32-35.
- Markham Comprehensive Plan (2014). Bicycle concerns are in Section 9-3: Open Space and Green Infrastructure (see especially p. 81)
- Midlothian Active Transportation Plan (2011)
- Oak Forest Non-Motorized Plan (2010)
- Park Forest Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2014)
- Richton Park Comprehensive Plan (2014). The bicycle and pedestrian element can be found on pages 41-44.
- Riverdale Active Transportation Plan (2011)

- Tinley Park Active Transportation Plan (2012)
- University Park Comprehensive Plan (2014). The bicycle and pedestrian element can be found on page 54.

Neighboring communities that have developed bicycle or other relevant plans include:

- Alsip Comprehensive Plan (2013). The bicycle element can be found on page 52.
- Blue Island Active Transportation Plan (2012) and Blue Island Comprehensive Plan (2011). The bicycle and pedestrian element can be found on pages 55-56.
- City of Chicago Streets for Cycling Plan 2020 (2012)
- Frankfort Bicycle Trail Plan (2005)
- Mokena Comprehensive Plan (2002). References on page 11 a *Bicycle Map Route and Trail Map*, prepared by Parsons Transportation Group Inc.
- Orland Park Recommended Bikeways Map (last updated, January 2015) and Orland Park Comprehensive Plan (2013). The bicycle and pedestrian element can be found at page 162ff. [external link]
- Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008), see pages 22, 25, and 55; and Palos Heights Comprehensive Plan (2008), see pages 49, 52, 53-55.

In addition to local plans, the Southwest Council of Mayors, Will County Land Use Department, Cook and Will County Forest Preserve Districts, CMAP, and NIRPC have produced bikeway or trails plans, which contain facilities that overlap with or border the 2008 SSMMA and South Council member plans. These sub-regional and regional plans include the Southwest Council of Mayors Bicycle Plan (2012), the Regional Trails Map (2015) of the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC is currently creating the county's first county-wide bicycle plan), the Will County Land Resource Management Plan (2002), the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Trail Master Plan (2013), and CMAP's Regional Greenways and Trails Plan (2009). Bikeway and trails plans and facilities within the South Council area are produced at different levels of government, for different geographic scales. In many cases, several or all jurisdictions' plans show the same basic facility alignments or corridors. In some cases, one jurisdiction's plan indicates facilities that are unique and/or that are significantly different from other plans' facilities. Generally, the larger the geographic scope of a plan, the more conceptual the planned facility and the more approximate the alignment.

Figure 2.8 Bicycle parking recommendation (from the Initiative for the Chicago Southland Transit Region)

In addition to the physical, infrastructure-related recommendations, the 2008 SSMMA plan made five prioritized program recommendations, listed below with updates on implementation status:

1. Staff a South Suburban Bicycle Coordinator position

   This recommendation has not been implemented. The South Council of Mayors, as well as other partner transportation agencies (CMAP, IDOT, County DOTs, local jurisdictions), have taken steps to increase knowledge, commitment, and resources allotted to non-motorized transportation planning, programming, and project implementation.

2. Expand capacity for bikes on transit

   This recommendation calls for SSMMA to work with and encourage Pace and Metra to increase and strengthen programs to allow bikes on buses and trains. All Pace buses – as was the case in 2008 – are equipped with folding racks on the front of the bus, which can carry two bicycles. Metra has strengthened its bikes-on-trains program by allowing more bikes, shortening the morning rush hour time when non-folding bikes are not allowed, and replacing "black out" dates for bikes-on-trains with "warning dates."

3. Establish a bicycle parking program

   This recommendation has not been implemented. The recommendation called for the establishment an annual program, utilizing CMAQ and other funding sources, to purchase and distribute bicycle parking racks to SSMMA member communities, park districts, and school districts. The only bike parking data pertaining to the South Council area is for Metra stations. According to Metra, all but three of the 19 stations within the South Council area have official bicycle parking. The Robbins station on the Rock Island, the 147th St.–Sibley Blvd. station on the Metra Electric Main Line, and Ashland Avenue station on the Metra Electric-Blue Island Branch do not have bike racks.[18] The 2001 transit study "Initiative for the Chicago Southland Transit Region" [19] recommends that sheltered bicycle parking be provided at all stations, near the station building.

4. Produce a regional car-free bicycling event

   Individual communities in the South Council of Mayors have created "open streets" events at which bicycling and other activities are highlighted and encouraged as fun, healthy, and sociable ways to travel and recreate. Oak Forest has held Open Streets as part of their annual Fleadh Festival on Cicero Avenue between 151st and 159th Streets.[20] Homewood and Chicago Heights have also sponsored open streets events.[21]

5. Seek out partnerships and opportunities with other transportation agencies, park districts and advocacy organizations

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[18] More information about bike parking facilities, including capacity and utilization at the station level, can be found in "Metra's 2008 System-Wide Bicycle Parking Inventory Report," at http://tinyurl.com/os23avc. For more information on bike parking at Metra stations, see section on transit below.

[19] www.rtams.org/reportLibrary/1319.pdf

[20] http://www.oak-forest.org/282/Oak-Forest-Fleadh

[21] See https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=z7nyYQaSlcQU.k7_gKvNxkVYs&ie=UTF8&t=h&oe=UTF8&msa=0 and http://cityofchicagoheights.org/News.aspx?siteid=1&newsid=207.

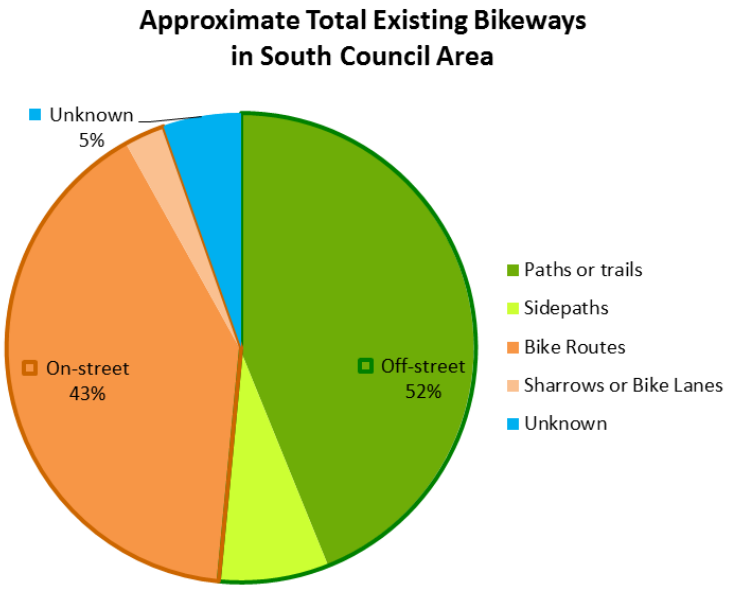
Progress on this recommendation is difficult to assess. One area where it appears that this recommendation has been implemented or produced significant results is in the success of Safe Routes to School projects and activities, which involved partnerships and coordination between SSMMA, local jurisdictions, IDOT, and advocacy groups such as the Active Transportation Alliance. The following table shows the SRTS awards to South Council communities.

Safe Routes to School Awards - South Council of Mayors Member Communities

Municipality	Year	Amount	Project Type	Project Description
South Chicago Heights	2008	$ 2,000.00	Non-Infrastructure	Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to students and parents
South Chicago Heights	2008	$ 3,400.00	Non-Infrastructure	Host International Walk to School Day or other special event
South Chicago Heights	2008	$ 5,490.00	Non-Infrastructure	Utilize speed feedback trailers or signs (portable)
Phoenix	2014	$ 160,000.00	Infrastructure	Construct new sidewalk and replace substandard sidewalks in the area around Coolidge Middle School
Richton Park	2014	$ 136,000.00	Infrastructure	Construct new sidewalk along Klawitter Park north of Neil Armstrong School and new curb ramps and sidewalk east of Richton Square School
Homewood	2011	$ 16,000.00	Infrastructure	Install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk, speed feedback signs (fixed), etc.)
University Park	2011	$ 23,750.00	Infrastructure	Construct, replace or repair sidewalks
University Park	2011	$ 24,000.00	Infrastructure	Install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk, speed feedback signs (fixed), etc.)
University Park	2011	$ 202,000.00	Infrastructure	Pedestrian Bridge. We will install a new pedestrian bridge across a waterway.
Matteson	2011	$ 50,000.00	Infrastructure	Install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk, speed feedback signs (fixed), etc.)
Matteson	2011	$ 200,000.00	Infrastructure	Construct, replace or repair sidewalks
Homewood	2011	$ 12,435.00	Non-Infrastructure	Utilize speed feedback trailers or signs (portable)
Steger	2011	$ 2,500.00	Non-Infrastructure	Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to students and parents
Steger	2011	$ 4,000.00	Non-Infrastructure	Host International Walk to School Day or other special event
Steger	2011	$ 17,870.00	Infrastructure	Install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk, speed feedback signs (fixed), etc.)

2.3.2 Existing Routes and Trails

As indicated in the previous section, the most significant progress has been in the expansion and improvement of the Southland's regional trail network, with some communities constructing on-street facilities. These facilities range from simple designated routes or signed routes, to marked shared lanes (sharrows), and traditional bike lanes. No Southland communities, to our knowledge, have installed buffered bike lanes or cycle tracks, or used green coloring to mark facilities.



According to CMAP's Bicycle Inventories System (BIS),[22] there are approximately 261 miles of existing bikeways within South Council of Mayors boundaries. Ignoring the 5 percent of facilities of unknown type (14 miles),[23] approximately half are on-street facilities and half are off-street facilities. On-street routes include bike routes, bike lanes, and marked shared lanes (sharrows). Most on-street facilities are "bike routes" (105 miles), either signed or designated. Some of these routes may require additional treatments in order to function safely and effectively as bikeways. A large portion of these designated routes are in the Villages of Homewood and Lansing. Only seven miles are bike lanes or sharrows.

Off-street facilities are comprised of paths, trails, and sidepaths. The majority of off-street facilities in the South Council are "paths" or "trails" (114 miles). These include major trails in Forest Preserve properties and along former rail lines, such as the Burnham / Pennsy Greenway, the Thorn Creek trail system, the Old Plank Road Trail, and the Tinley Creek trail system. In addition to these multi-use trail facilities, the South Council contains about 20 miles of "sidepaths," many of which are multi-use paths built as part of subdivisions or recent roadway reconstruction projects. Many of these "sidepaths" are not associated with any roadway ROW, but meander in shared green space or water retention areas within residential subdivisions. Between sidepaths, trails, and paths, the South Council has over 130 miles of off-street facilities.

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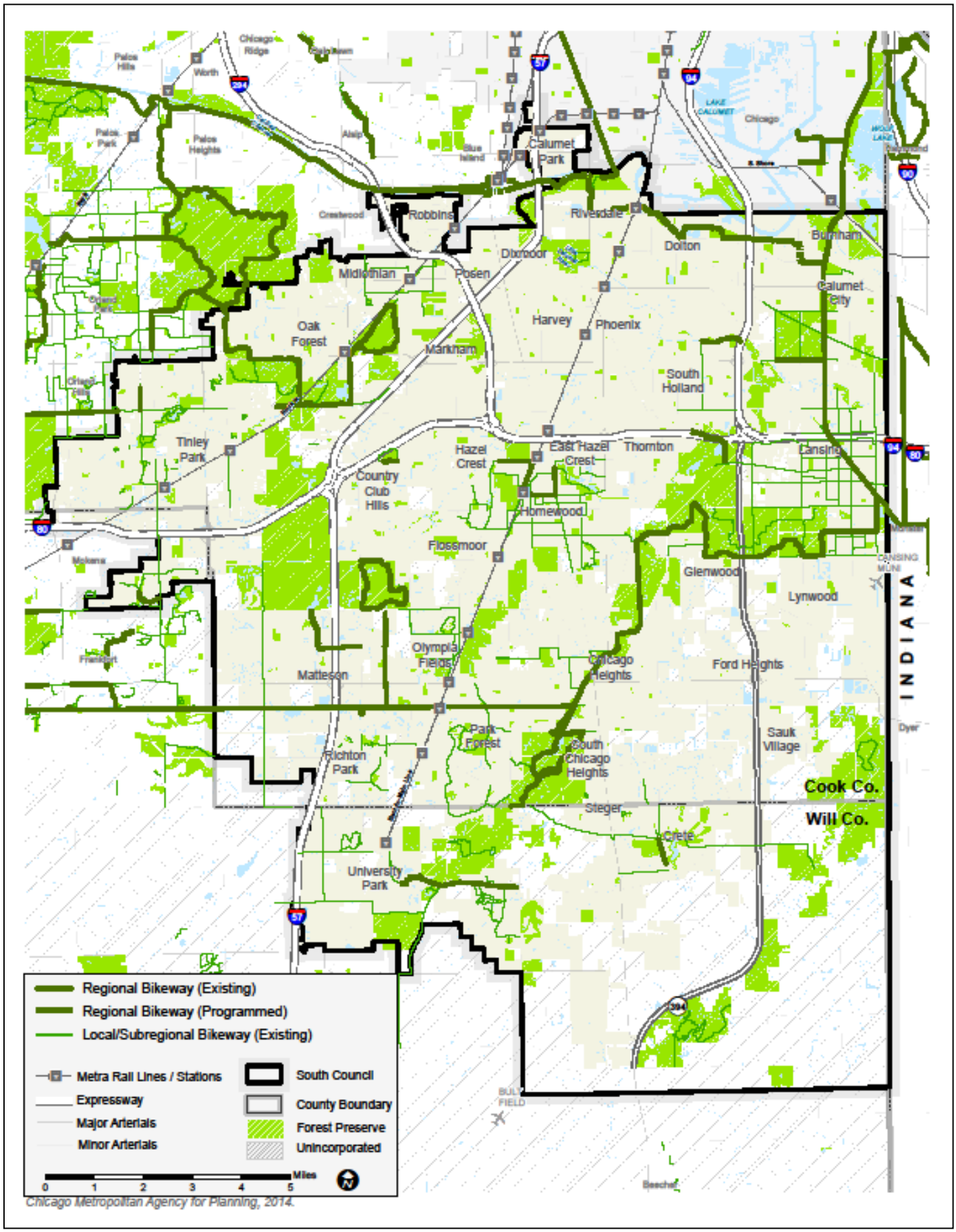
[22] CMAP's Bikeway Inventory System (BIS) contains datasets for bicycle facilities in the Chicago metropolitan area. The BIS contains a layer for each identified bikeway plan (or plan with a bikeway component) within the seven-county area. These plans have been developed and adopted by local governments, sub-regional Councils of Mayors, Counties, and, in conjunction with all the region's stakeholders, by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (The Regional Greenways and Trails Plan). The BIS contains areas of duplicated or overlapping linework. This is a result of: 1) the decision to include all available datasets, and 2) the fact that jurisdictions may overlap or be nested within other jurisdictions. For our analysis of the South Council area, we have edited the BIS data in attempt to remove duplicate linework in order to arrive at overall statistics and to better communicate existing conditions. For more information on the BIS or to access the data directly, see: https://datahub.cmap.illinois.gov/dataset/bis.

[23] The large majority of existing bikeways that lack data indicating facility type appear to be on-street facilities. However, many of these – as with those that do indicate facility type – may at present lack treatments that make them bike-friendly for the average cyclist.

Figure 2.9 Existing Bikeways



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

In addition to existing facilities, the BIS shows 488 miles of planned bikeway facilities in the South Council, with 269 miles planned by local agencies, 219 miles from sub-regional plans, and 80 miles of planned bikeways in the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan. As mentioned above, some facilities appear in multiple plans and therefore overlap – though not always with the exact same alignments. Planned routes are conceptual and the alignments approximate. The facility type for planned bikeways in the BIS is not generally specified or known.

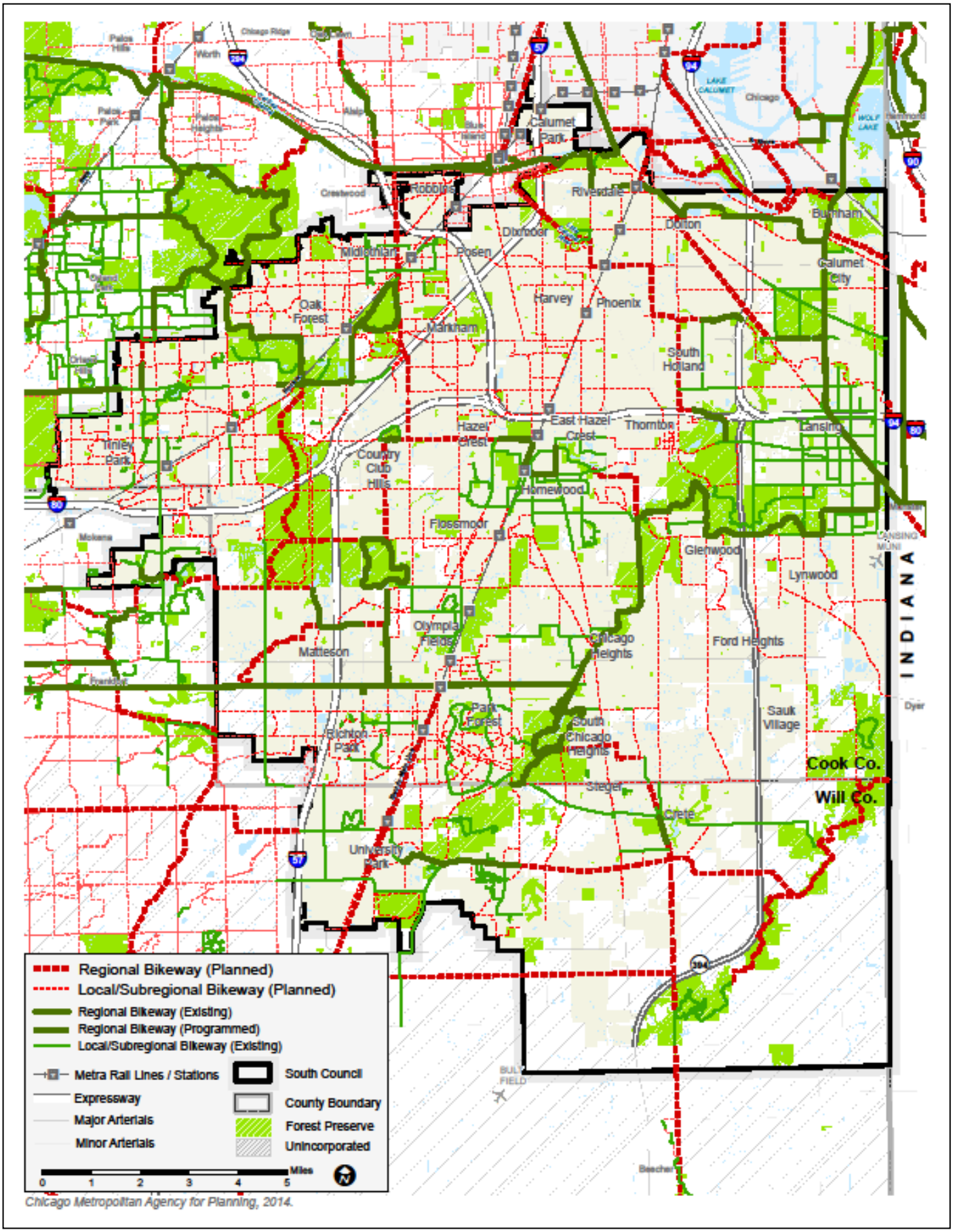
Several planned facilities provide important opportunities for connecting various branches of the existing regional bikeway. One facility in the Village of Lansing would connect the Burnham/Pennsy Greenway Trail to the Thorn Creek Trail system, which connects to the Old Plank Road Trail. The Old Plank Road Trail is currently being extended to meet the Thorn Creek Trail in the City of Chicago Heights. To connect these important trail systems, a facility could utilize the existing utility ROW (between 190th Street and 190th Place) from Wentworth Avenue to the Thorn Creek Trail (which would entail construction of bridges over Thorn Creek and the large ditch along Burnham Avenue) or it could use a route associated with roadway ROW – for example, along 186th Street.

Another facility that would provide a very important connection between existing trail networks is the facility connecting the southern loop of the Tinley Creek trail (between Flossmoor Rd., Vollmer Rd., Cicero Ave., and Crawford Ave) with the northern Tinley Creek network. Together with a short segment along Vollmer Rd., this connection would create a link between the Old Plank Road Trail and the western segment of the Cal-Sag Trail. Creation of this facility would entail grade-separated crossings of both Interstate 57 and 80. Other important opportunities include connecting the following:

- Major Taylor Trail in the City of Chicago and the Burnham Greenway
- Thorn Creek Trail and Tinley Creek Trail systems through Homewood, Hazel Crest and Markham
- Communities in the northern part of the South Council to the Cal-Sag Trail

Some of these connections might be feasible along abandoned rail lines, utility ROWs, and on existing roadway ROW.

Figure 2.10 Planned Bikeways

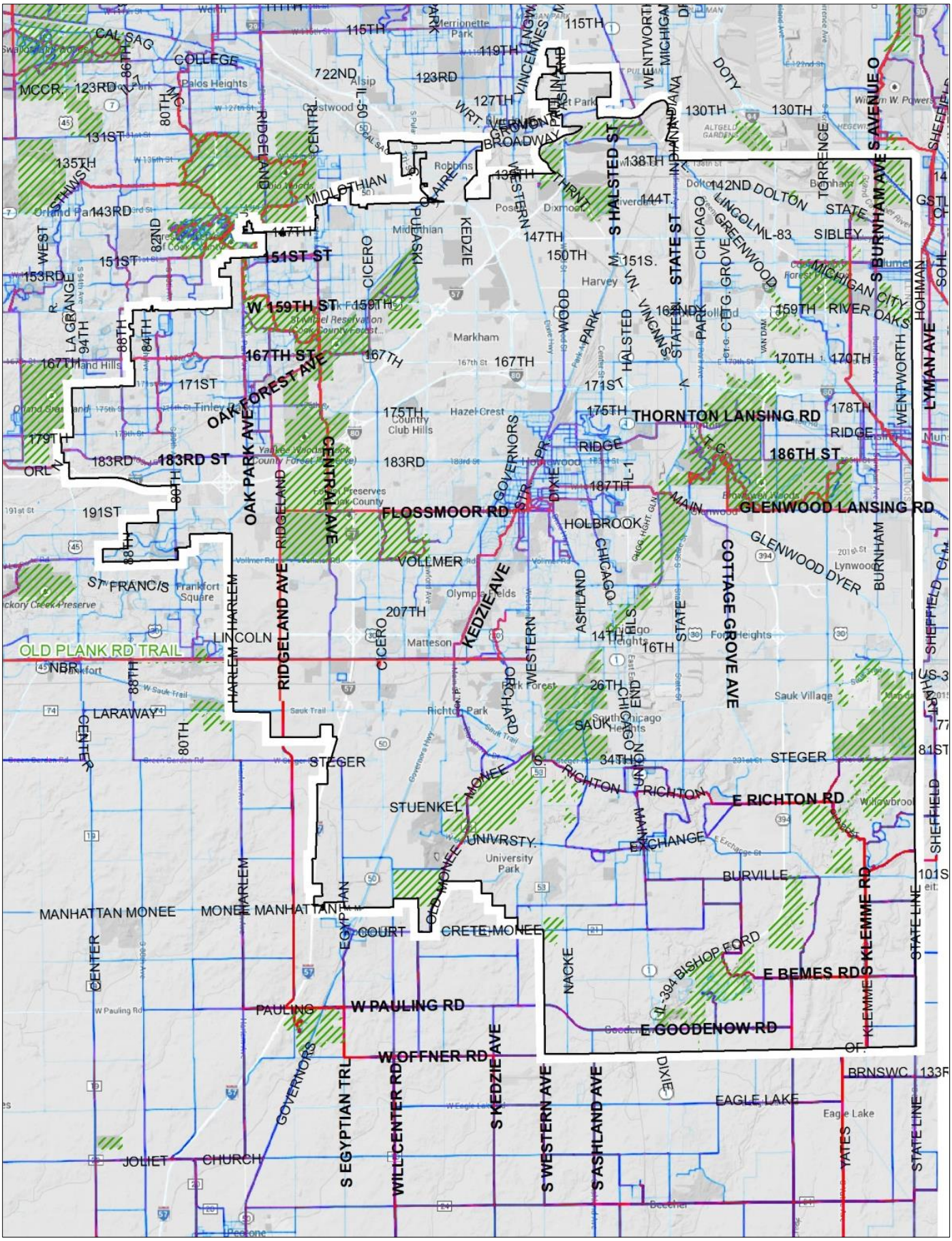


2.3.3 Where people bicycle

Little is known about where in the South Council people are bicycling most – or whether most cycling trips are primarily for recreation or for transportation. One source of information about cyclists' travel routes is Strava Labs Global Heat Map.[24] This map visualizes the routes and the aggregated volume of cyclists using the Strava app on their smartphones as they ride. An obvious caveat regarding Strava Labs' data is that it applies only to people actively using the app. These users tend to be serious, confident, and experienced cyclists who are more likely to be bicycling for fitness and recreation than for transportation; they may often be riding in groups or with cycling clubs. They are less likely to be low income riders, and more likely to be male. Nevertheless, in the absence of better data, Strava data is useful since cyclists of all levels and abilities tend to seek out and utilize safe and convenient routes and avoid less safe, higher stress routes.

[24] Strava Labs is a project of Strava Inc., a bicycle ride and run tracking and sharing app to connect and create camaraderie among athletes around the world. Note: Strava Labs does not produce a legend for their heat map. The map represents generalized frequency of rides by Strava users. Red lines indicate more users, blue lines fewer users. Thicker and darker lines mean more users.

Figure 2.11 Strava Heatmap (South Council of Mayors area)



Strava's map indicates that the major regional trails – especially the Forest Preserve trails – are the most heavily used routes. Certain roadways are also regularly used by Strava cyclists, and some off-road facilities along roadways may be difficult to distinguish from the roads themselves. In the northern half of the South Council area, there are plenty of heavily utilized north-south corridors while east-west routes are not as heavily traveled. This could be because they are not safe, popular, or traveled by your typical Strava rider.

North-south routes (by location within the South Council) that stand out on the Strava map include:

Northwest

- Ridgeland Avenue
- Central Avenue
- Oak Park Avenue

Northeast

- Avenue O/Burnham Avenue
- The Burnham Greenway
- State Street
- Halsted Street

Southwest

- Ridegeland Avenue
- S Egyptian Trail
- Old Monee

Southeast

- Klemme Road
- Stoney Island Avenue

East-west routes (by location in the South Council) that stand out on the Strava map include:

Northwest

- Flossmoor Road
- 159th Street
- 167th Street
- Oak Forest Avenue
- 183rd Street

Northeast

- Glenwood Lansing Road
- Thornton Lansing Road
- 151st Street

Southwest

- Old Plan Road Trail

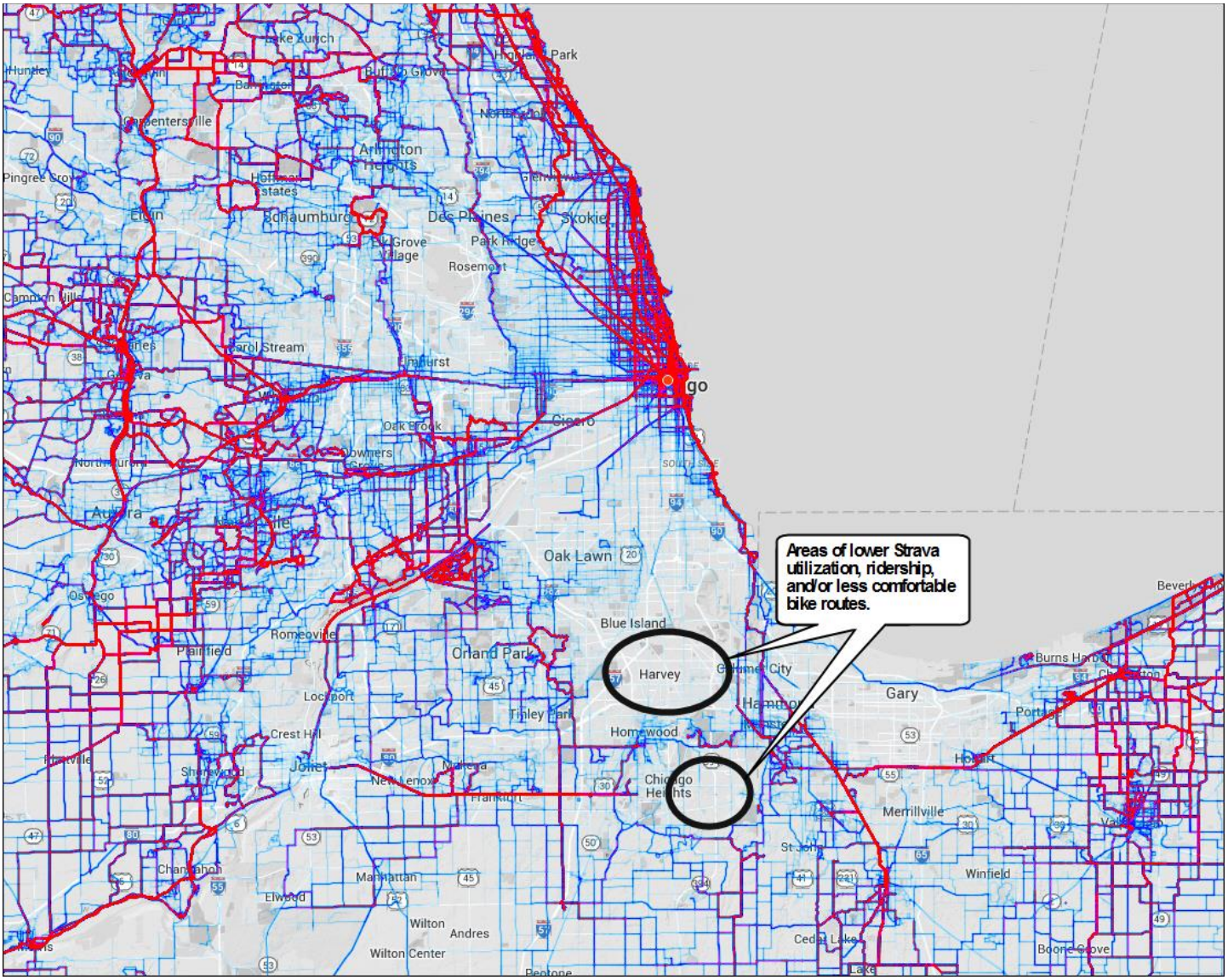
Southeast

- Richton Road
- E Bemes Road
- E Goodenow Road

The Village of Homewood lies near the geographic center of the South Council area and exhibits relatively high Strava ridership on many streets and connects to a number of popular, longer-distance east-west routes, including Flossmoor Road (between Ridgeland Ave. and Dixie Highway), 187th St./Main St. (in Glenwood), and Ridge Rd./Margaret St. (in Thornton).

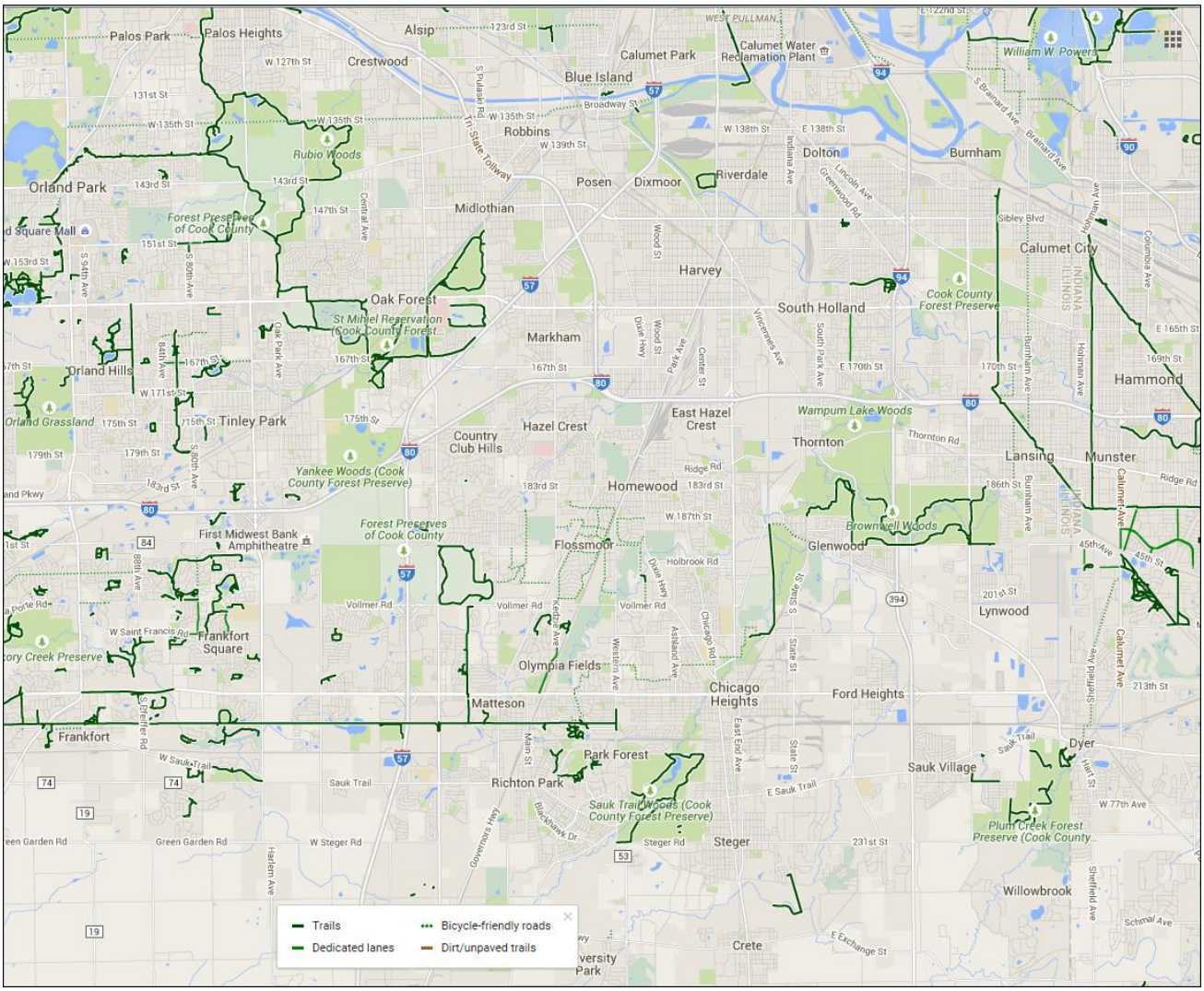
When we zoom out on the Strava map to include the larger region, we see big gaps in the South Council area. The low utilization of Strava in this area similar to the south side of Chicago and the City of Gary, IN.

Figure 2.12 Strava Heatmap (Region)



In addition to Strava user data Google Maps provides bicycling route information. This data is acquired from cities and other jurisdictions voluntarily through Google's Base Map Partner Program. Although the routes indicated may not be completely accurate and up-to-date, the maps do provide a general overview of the density of existing routes, types of bikeways, and gaps in the overall network. The following is a screenshot of Google Maps bicycling routes for the South Council area.

Figure 2.13 Google Maps Bikeways Screenshot



2.4 Walking

2.4.1 Pedestrian Infrastructure and Walkability

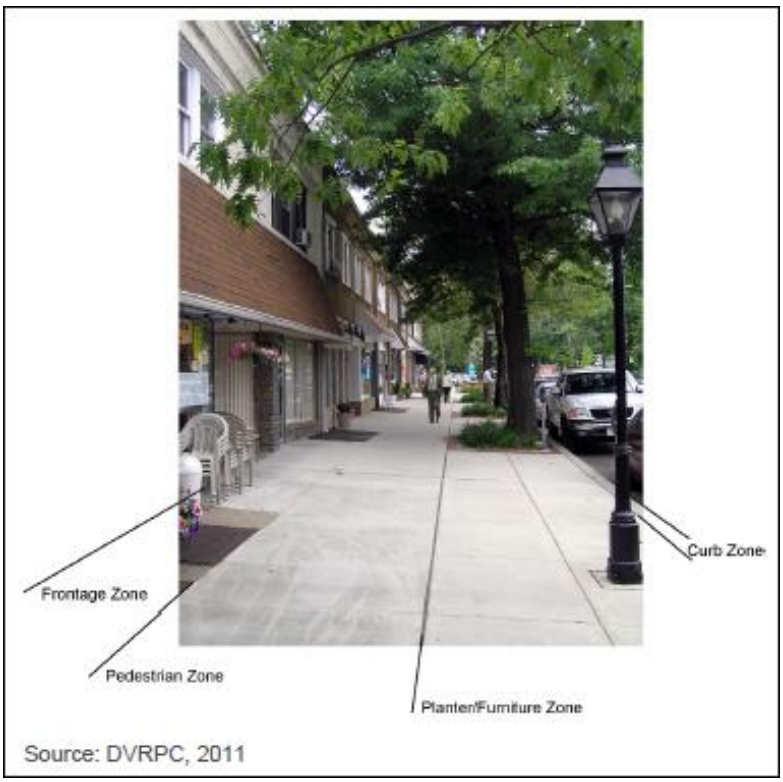
Walkability is an important factor in the health and vitality of our communities. Elements of a walkable neighborhood include a central attraction, main street, or public space; buildings close to the street; an interconnected network of sidewalks and pathways; and complete streets designed for safe travel for all modes – foot, bicycle, transit, and car.

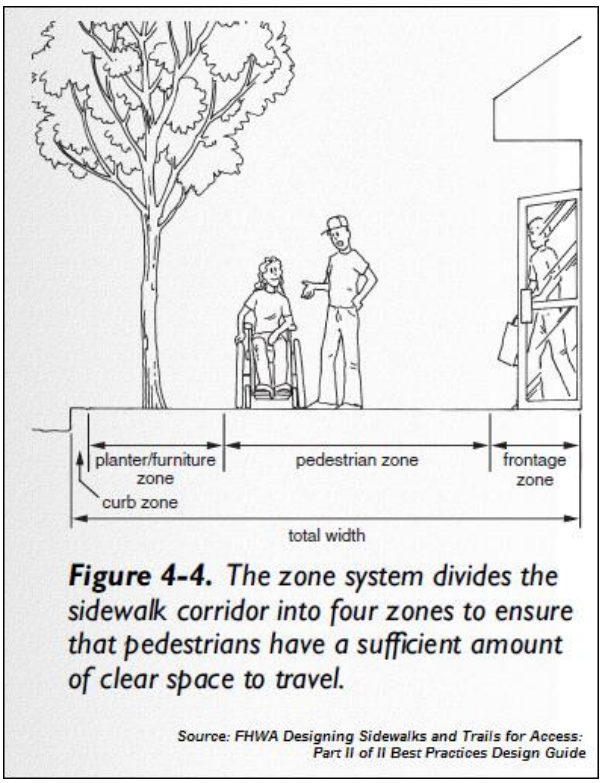
Another important aspect of walkability is the utilization of the sidewalk zone system.[25] In addition to walkways and the public right-of-way, land use issues, such as housing density, access to amenities, stores,

[25] For more information, see http://nacto.org/usdg/street-design-elements/sidewalks/.

parks, and places of work are also important. Many planners refer to the “D’s” of walkability: density, diversity, design, as well as destination access and distance to transit and other destinations.[26]

Figure 2.14 Sidewalk Zone System





Having the ability to walk to accomplish errands or to reach a variety of amenities is good for personal health, the environment, and for household cost savings. The website WalkScore.com estimates the following:

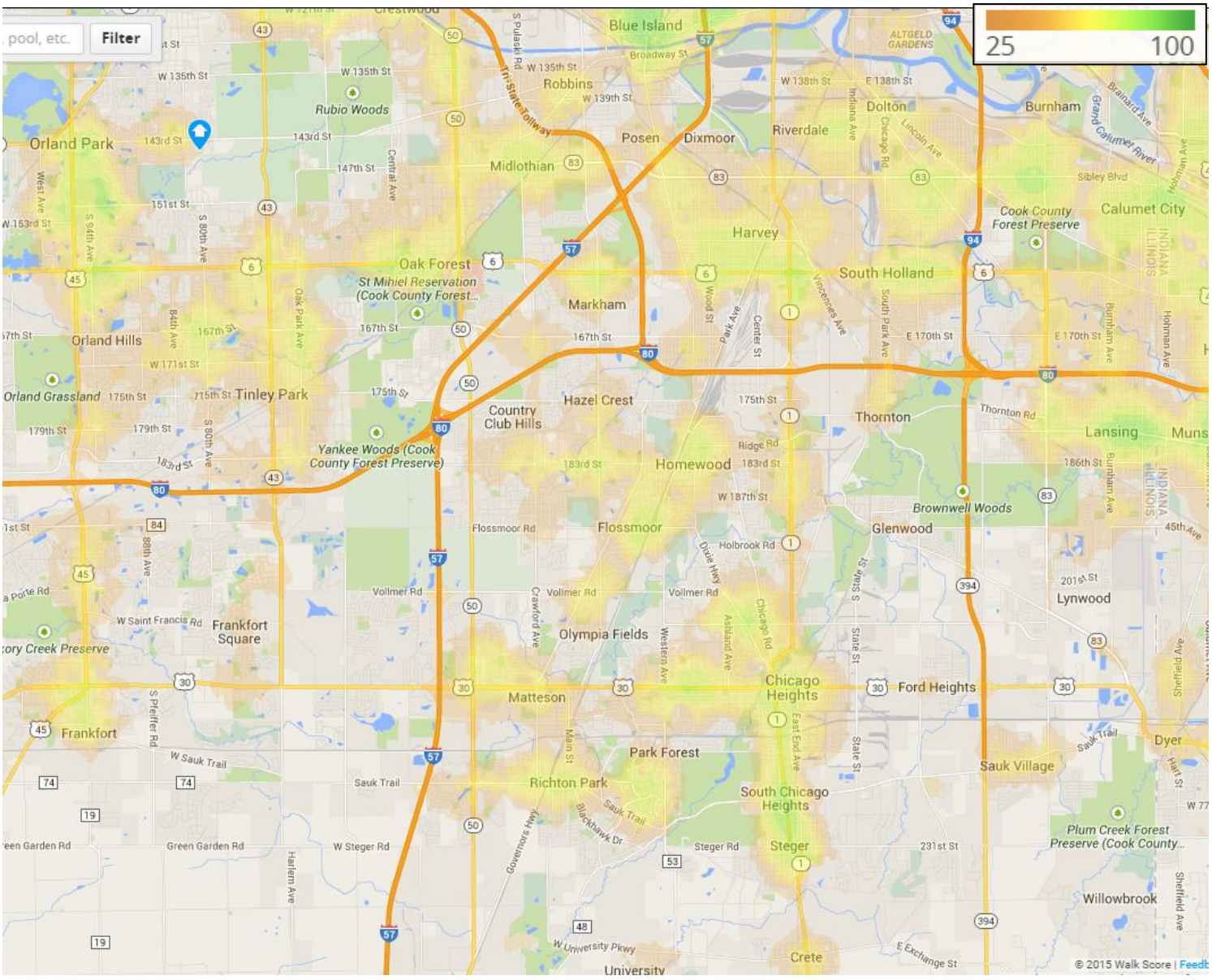
- People in walkable places weigh 6-10 lbs. less than people in auto-oriented communities.
- For every ten minutes a person spends in a daily car commute, time spent in community activities falls by 10 percent.
- One point of Walk Score is worth $3,000 in home value.

[26] For more information on the “D”s of walkability, see http://www.walkable.org/. Also see, “Transit-Oriented Communities: A literature review on the relationship between the built environment and transit ridership” at http://reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/20110114TransitOrientedCommunitiesLiteratureReview.pdf.

Walkscore

Most communities in the South Suburbs, when evaluated by Walkscore.com, fall into the “car-dependent” category, meaning that most errands require a car. As is common in many suburban locations, major shopping destinations have been separated from residential areas and large arterials make travel without a car unpleasant or unsafe. Several downtown areas either have historically more walkable cores, or have made strides to improve the walkability of their community. Some of these strategies include narrowing crossing distances, improving visibility of crosswalks, and improving the pedestrian experience with lighting, benches, and other amenities.

Figure 2.15 South Council Regional Walkscrore Evaluation



Note: Walkscore.com ranks walkability on a scale of 1-100. In the map above, shades of green indicate higher walkscores, while shades of yellow and orange indicate lower scores.

For example, the average Walkscore for the Village of Park Forest is 32 / 100, classifying it a “Car-Dependent City.” However, the area along Park Forest’s “Main Street” scores 66 / 100, or “Somewhat Walkable.” These ratings mostly rely on the number of accessible amenities, but also include factors such as access to transit, intersection density, block length, and population density. Strategies that help to create a more connected and attractive pedestrian network focus on the importance of clear wayfinding systems, connections to transit and other modes, as well as public space amenities such as street furniture, landscaping, and public art. Having a high-quality pedestrian experience is important to encourage more people to walk and to enhance overall quality of life through increased environmental sustainability, safety, and mobility.

As a region, the south suburbs face many challenges to robust walkability. The area is crisscrossed with rail lines, rail yards, and highways, making safe crossings difficult for people using any mode of transportation. A reduced number of roadways with grade-separated crossings of highways or train lines results in traffic being channeled into those crossings, and priority for travel efficiency is usually given to cars and trucks. This results in a negative feedback loop with unsafe conditions to walk or bike forcing more people to drive for short trips. In addition to rail infrastructure and expressways, the South Council area has multiple waterways, large industrial areas, and extensive Forest Preserve properties. While they may constitute important destinations for pedestrians and cyclists, they often present barriers to connectivity. Like many suburban areas of the region, the south suburbs have many large, high-speed major arterial roads, which also can act as barriers to walking and cycling. These arterials are generally spaced every mile from one another, in a grid pattern across the South Council area, with others running diagonally through the area. This pattern creates large, skewed intersections that can be very difficult for pedestrians to cross.

Sidewalks & paths

Sidewalks, which provide a dedicated right-of-way for pedestrians, represent the most basic and essential element in walkable communities. However, the mere presence of sidewalks does not guarantee that travel on foot will be safe, comfortable, and convenient. Sidewalks vary in quality and in the experience they offer to those who use them. Issues such as obstructions, poor maintenance, lack of curb ramps and other accessibility features, insufficient width, proximity to high-speed traffic, and gaps in the network can limit the utility and function of sidewalks. Sidewalks along high-speed, high-volume roadways with no separation or buffer are especially inadequate. Although such an arrangement meets the basic requirement of providing a walkway, the danger and discomfort of walking along such facilities discourages walking.

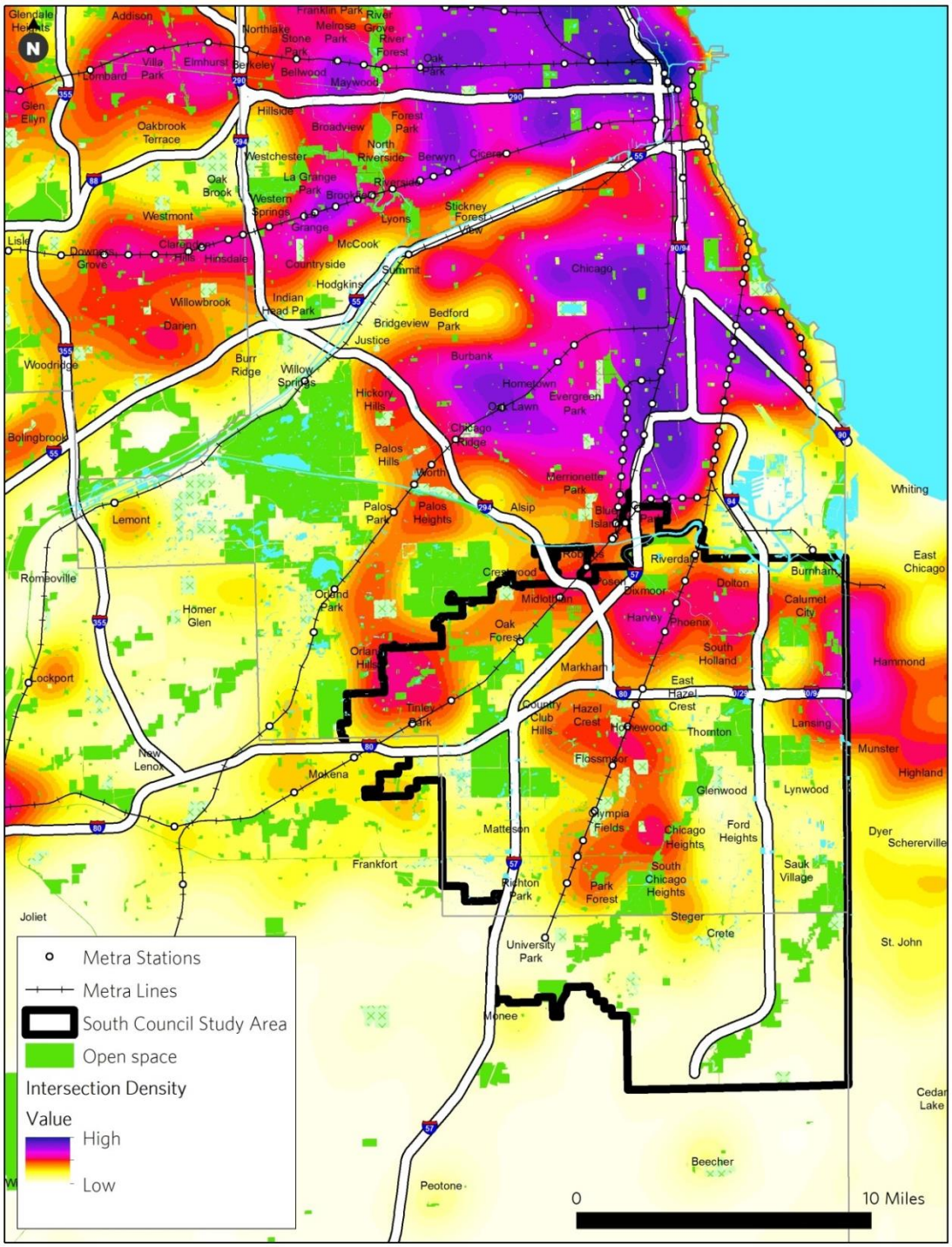
Street Connectivity

In addition to sidewalk coverage, another accepted measure of walkability is block size and the connectedness of existing streets, which can be assessed through intersection density. While a fairly fine-grained street grid pattern is found in many downtown “main streets” areas, many other areas either lack well-connected streets. These areas may contain large, ‘big box’ retail areas, industrial zones, Forest Preserves, rail and intermodal yards and or areas cut off by rail lines or highways; they may have long blocks

or curvilinear street patterns with cul-de-sacs. Such conditions make it difficult for pedestrians to find a convenient, direct route.

To help visualize and assess overall walkability in the area in the absence of sidewalk coverage data, Figure 2.16 illustrates the density of intersections in the South Suburbs, as compared to neighboring areas. Dark blue indicates areas with the highest intersection density, red is medium density, while yellow and white indicates areas with lowest densities of intersections.

Figure 2.16 Intersection Density in the Region



2.5 Transit

Regional public transportation options that serve the South Council of Mayors include Metra commuter rail service and Pace suburban bus service. While Metra primarily serves the western half of the South Council, Pace buses operate throughout a larger portion of the area, providing north-south connections outside of the Metra service area, such as Route 83 between Calumet City and Sauk Village, and east-west connections, such as 183rd Street between Homewood and Tinley Park. In addition to fixed routes, Pace bus also provides a Call-n-Ride service – the Tinley Park Call-n-Ride – which offers reservation-based, curb-to-curb service within the designated service area. Pace also offers curb-to-curb paratransit service to seniors and people with mobility impairments through its Dial-a-Ride program in Bloom Township, the Village of Park Forest, Rich Township, the Village of Tinley Park, Worth Township, Frankfort Township, and Monee Township. Several other townships within the South Council operate similar paratransit programs, including the Thornton Township Senior Transportation Program and the Bremen Township Senior Wheels program.

CMAP, as part of the update of GO TO 2040, created a Regional Access to Transit Index. The index, which is calculated for each transit analysis zone (TAZ or subzone), takes into account transit service frequency, pedestrian friendliness, network distance to transit stops, and number of subzone connections. Each factor is measured individually at the subzone level and an index value is assigned to each subzone. The Transit Accessibility Index is then the average of these four factor indices that have been assigned to each subzone.

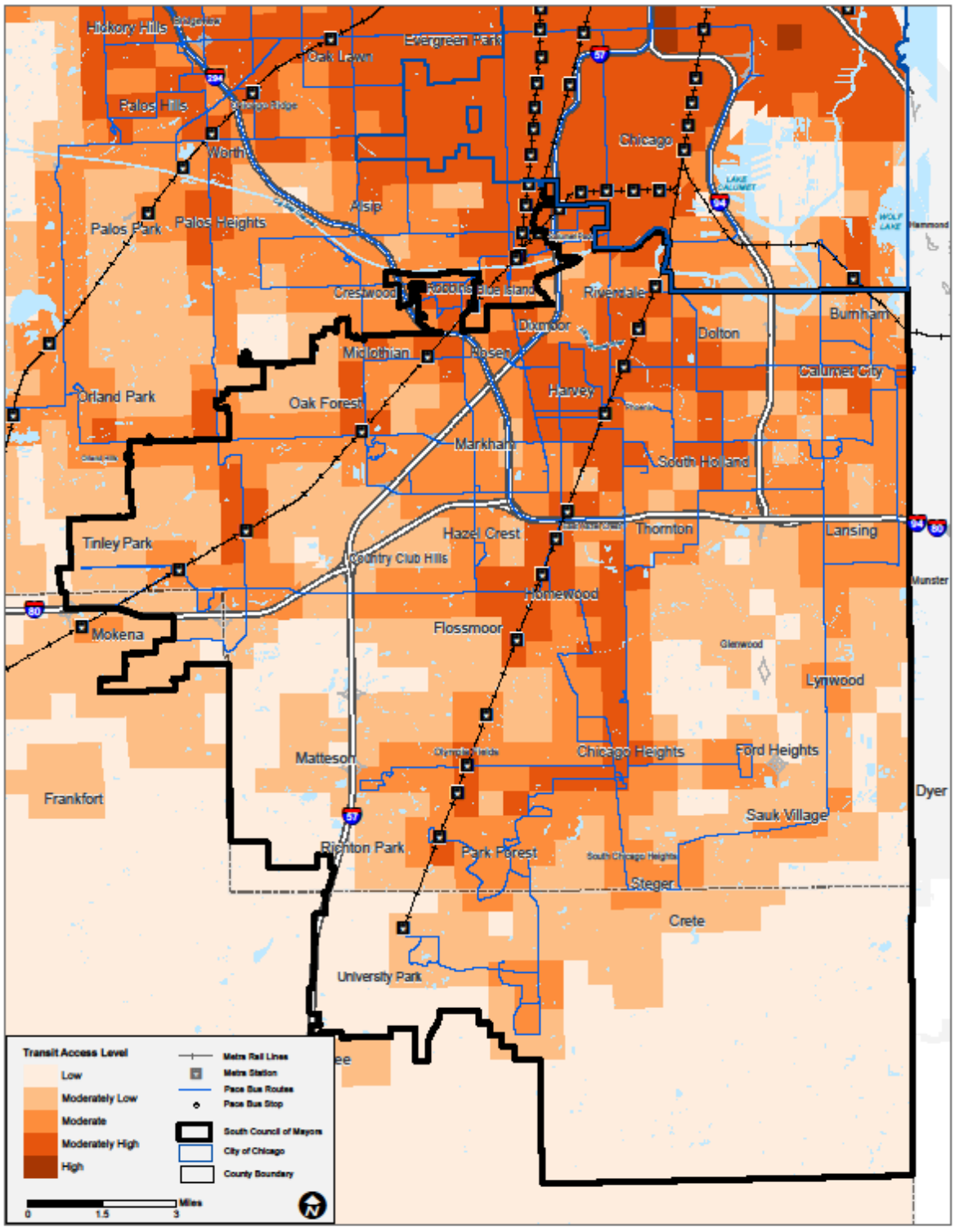
The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has also created a Regional Transit Index showing a combination of demographics that are indicators of an area's potential to generate local transit trips, based on transit trip rates in the Chicago region. The RTA analysis evaluating potential for transit ridership is based primarily upon adult and senior population (density). People in households with children are less likely to ride transit. In addition, having more cars in a household will reduce transit demand. Also, retail workers are more likely to ride transit compared to other types of employment. The combined index does not include factors such as pedestrian networks or motor vehicle access to transit stops, park-and-ride facilities, or designated drop-off locations.

According to the RTA's Regional Transit Demand Index, the South Council has a range of nominal to high transit demand overall. The distribution of these expected levels of transit ridership generally follows the existing access to transit (See Figure 2.18). For example, areas that offer the highest concentration of potential demand for transit within the South Council (Calumet City, Tinley Park, and Matteson) are also near transit-oriented development (TOD) zones. RTA defines TOD zones as the area within a half-mile radius from rail stations and within a quarter-mile radius from bus stations. While the index confirms that the transit options within the South Council are well-positioned relative to the expected need, the tool also helps illustrate the many gaps in access to transit which exist primarily on the south and east sides.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 29 percent of residents living within the South Council work in Chicago. This is similar to the percentage for the seven-county region (31.8 percent), but lower than the estimated percentage for Cook County (45 percent). Despite the similarity in employment location, far

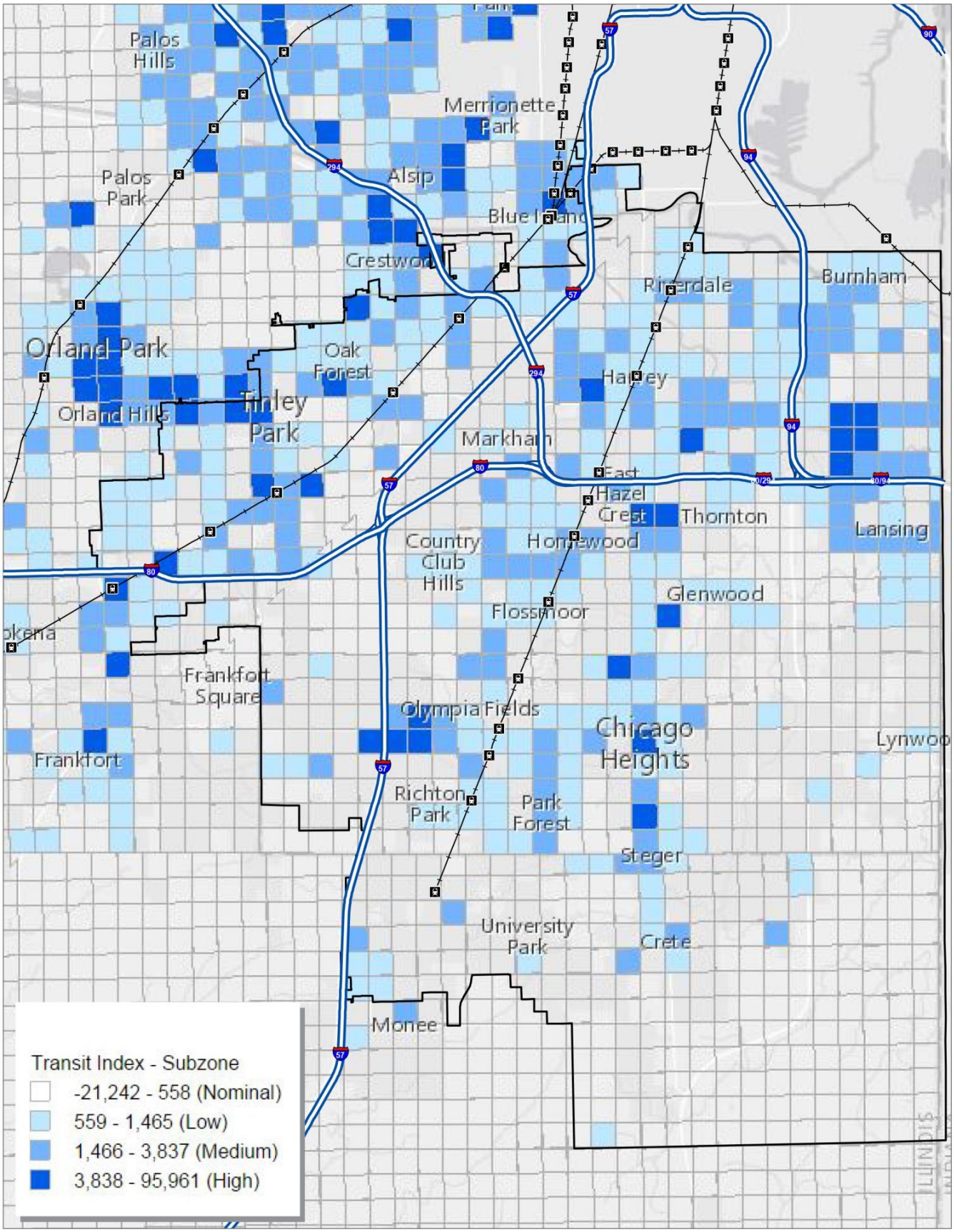
fewer residents of the South Council take public transit to work compared to Cook County and the region. The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates for 2009-2013 indicate that approximately 9.4 percent of South Council residents commuted to work via public transportation. This is nearly half of the percentage for Cook County (18.5 percent), and also well below the average for the region (13 percent).

Figure 2.17: CMAP Access to Transit Index



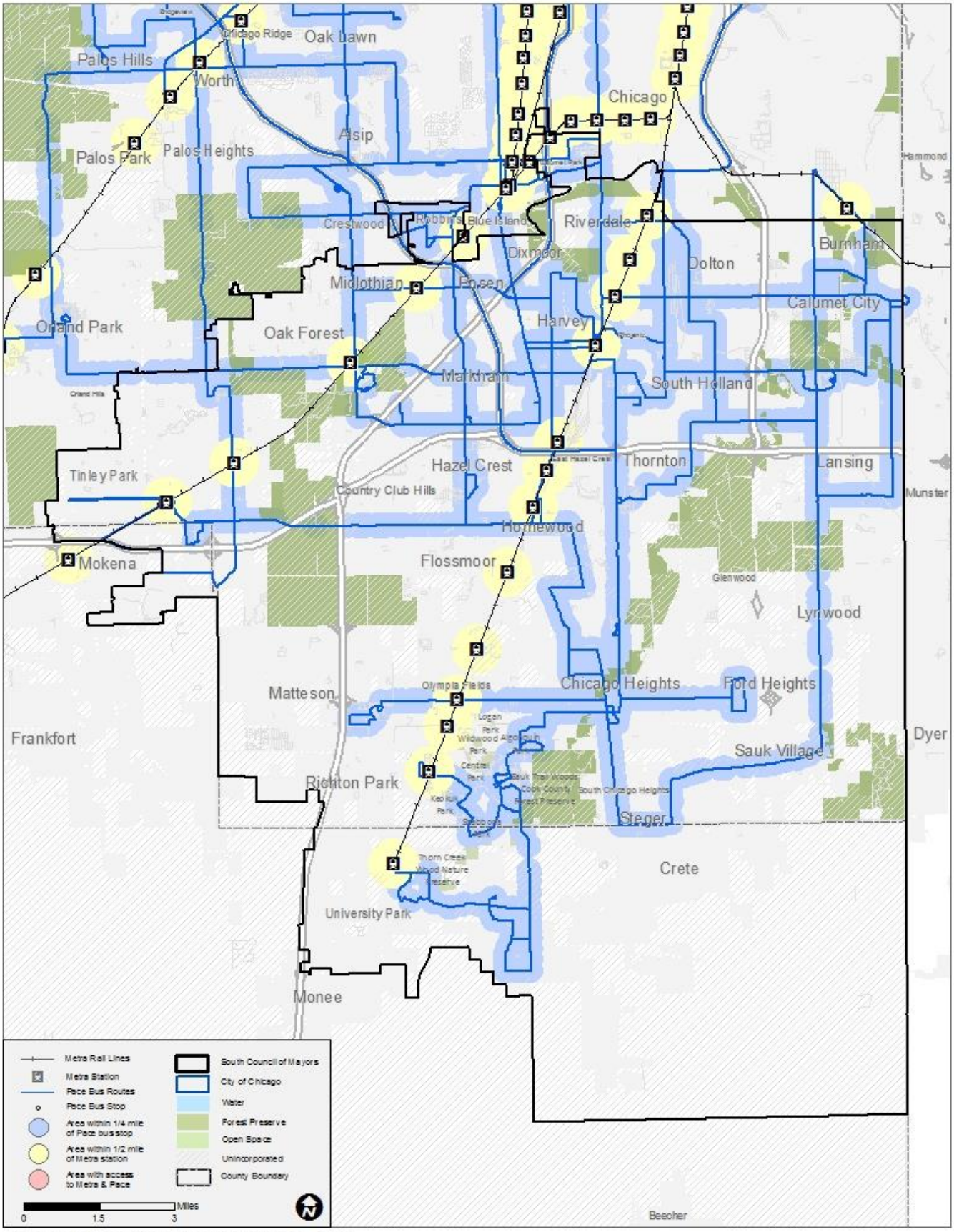
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Figure 2.18: RTA Transit Demand Index



Regional Transportation Authority, 2015.

Figure 2.19: Access to Transit



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

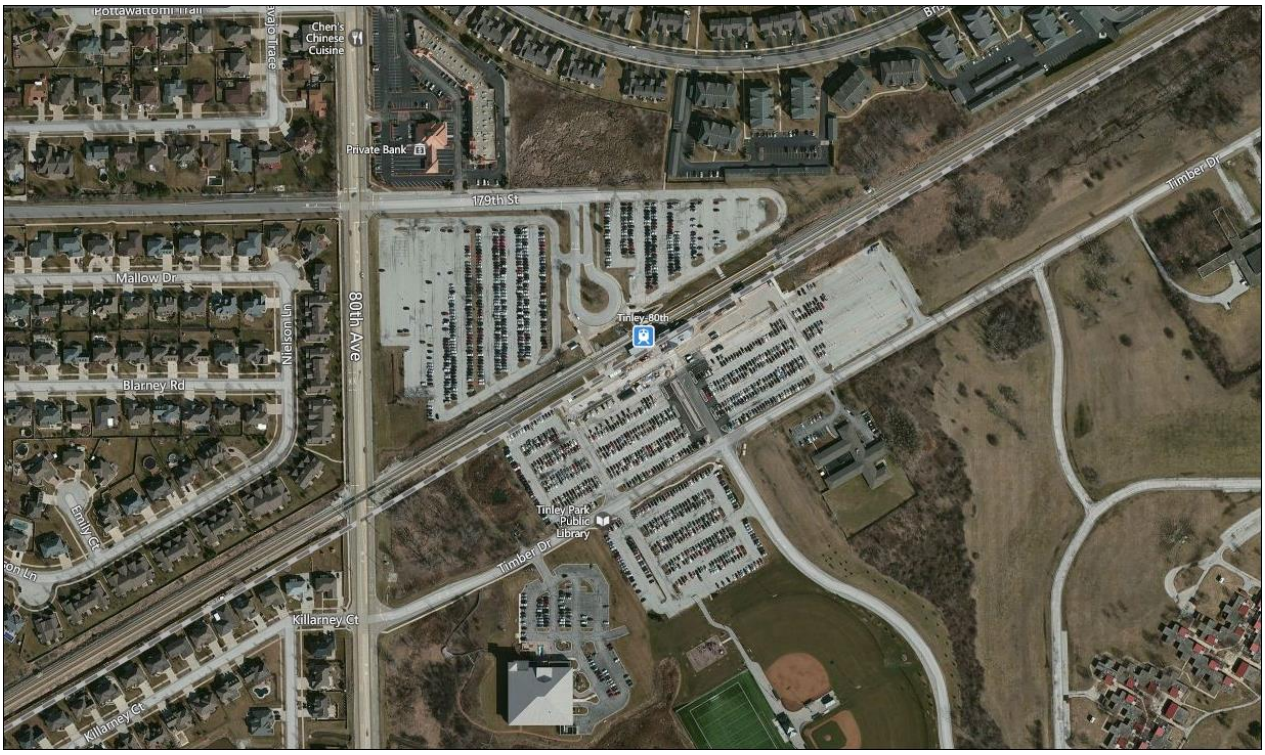
2.5.1 Metra

Metra's Electric District (Main Line and Blue Island Branch) and Rock Island District serve the South Council at 19 stations. The South Shore Line and SouthWest Service run through communities to the east and west of the Council area respectively, with an additional 16 stations. The Metra rail lines connect these communities to downtown Chicago and to other suburbs south of the city and in northwest Indiana. Many stations are located within historic centers and downtown business districts, while a few are situated at the edge of downtown, or are considered destination stations. The residential areas in and near the downtown stations have the most convenient access to Metra. Per the Southland's "Green TIME Zone" development framework for TOD sites,[27] residential densities here have been consciously and purposefully increased, land uses diversified, and urban designs implemented in order to support transit, walking, and bicycling. As mentioned previously, difficult crossings over railroad tracks and major roads present safety challenges for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Station area design contributes to the overall bicycle and pedestrian accessibility. Stations within the South Council are generally less accessible than many in Metra's system due to the lack of connectivity with surrounding residential neighborhoods. The 80th Avenue (Tinley Park) Station, for example, has the highest ridership of all stations within the South Council with 1,932 total weekday boardings, yet a very small percentage of commuters walk (5 percent) or bike (1 percent) to the station. Large commuter parking lots are provided on either side of the station and accessed from Timber Drive and 179th Street. Accessing the station on foot or bicycle from the residential areas north and west of the station entails traveling along or across 80th Avenue (which has no sidewalks south of Kallarney Court), and crossing the unsignalized intersection of 80th Avenue and Killarney Court/Timber Drive, or the signalized intersection of 80th Avenue and 179th Street, where the multi-use path (connecting neighborhoods to the north) currently ends (though it continues as a sidewalk to the station building). However, in the case of the 80th Avenue (Tinley Park) station, considerations

Figures 2.20-22 Metra Station Infrastructure

[27] For the Green TIME Zone, see https://sites.google.com/a/chicagosouthlandedc.org/chicago-southland-economic-development-corporation/green-time-zone. For the Green TIME Zone's "South Suburban TOD Areas" study, see https://sites.google.com/a/chicagosouthlandedc.org/transitregion/.



beyond pedestrian infrastructure and access – such as station location outside of a downtown district, surrounding land uses and development patterns, as well as the large amount of vacant land directly to the southeast (the former mental health facility) – may limit the ability of this station to achieve high percentages of people walking and bicycling to the station, when compared to stations located in more centralized and densely developed areas.

In contrast, Flossmoor Station is incorporated into the multi-use district of the Village's downtown core. Flossmoor Station is located in the heart of the community, and boasts the highest levels of pedestrian (27 percent) and bicyclist (3 percent) access among stations in the South Council. Commuter parking for automobiles is provided in a single lot just southwest of the station and is relatively well utilized.

Figures 2.23-24 Metra Station Infrastructure

Table 2.1 highlights ridership and parking capacity and utilization at each station within the South Council. Across both Metra lines, the 80th Avenue (Tinley Park) station is the busiest station in the area in terms of total weekday boardings. The parking capacity at this station is nearly twice as much as any other station. Large parking lots adjacent to stations make it easier to serve people in cars, but it precludes development of tax-generating land uses and it tends to make walking and biking feel more dangerous. For those reasons and others, many pedestrians and bicyclists prefer stations in transit-oriented districts.

Table 2.1 Boardings, Parking, and Mode of Access for Stations within South Council of Mayors

Station	Total Weekday Boardings, 2014	Parking Capacity, 2014	Parking Utilization (Effective), 2014	Bike Parking Capacity, 2008	Bike Parking Utilization, 2008	Mode of Access (Walk), 2014	Mode of Access (Bike), 2014
Metra Electric District: Main Line							
Riverdale	201	259	27%	7	0%	34%	1%
Ivanhoe	697	462	76%	21	0%	26%	0%
147th Street (Sibley)	1,060	1,121	60%	0	0%	3%	0%
Harvey	640	875	34%	9	0%	8%	0%
Hazel Crest	379	140	100%	8	0%	12%	0%
Calumet	1,187	1,184	93%	31	0%	3%	0%
Homewood	1,244	522	94%	77	35%	21%	2%
Flossmoor	830	275	100%	44	105%	27%	3%
Olympia Fields	665	504	86%	11	36%	6%	0%
211th Street (Lincoln)	855	694	66%	56	0%	7%	0%
Matteson	592	753	48%	5	100%	15%	0%
Richton Park	1,315	1,047	69%	36	19%	17%	0%
University Park	939	1,066	62%	22	9%	1%	0%
Metra Electric District: Blue Island Branch							
Ashland Avenue	98	89	52%	0	0%	34%	0%
Rock Island District							
Robbins	77	151	4%	0	0%	29%	0%
Midlothian	950	606	86%	24	33%	15%	0%
Oak Forest	1,141	987	73%	31	10%	7%	1%
Tinley Park	983	784	96%	24	92%	16%	1%
80th Avenue (Tinley Park)	1,932	2,126	71%	48	42%	5%	1%

Source: Metra

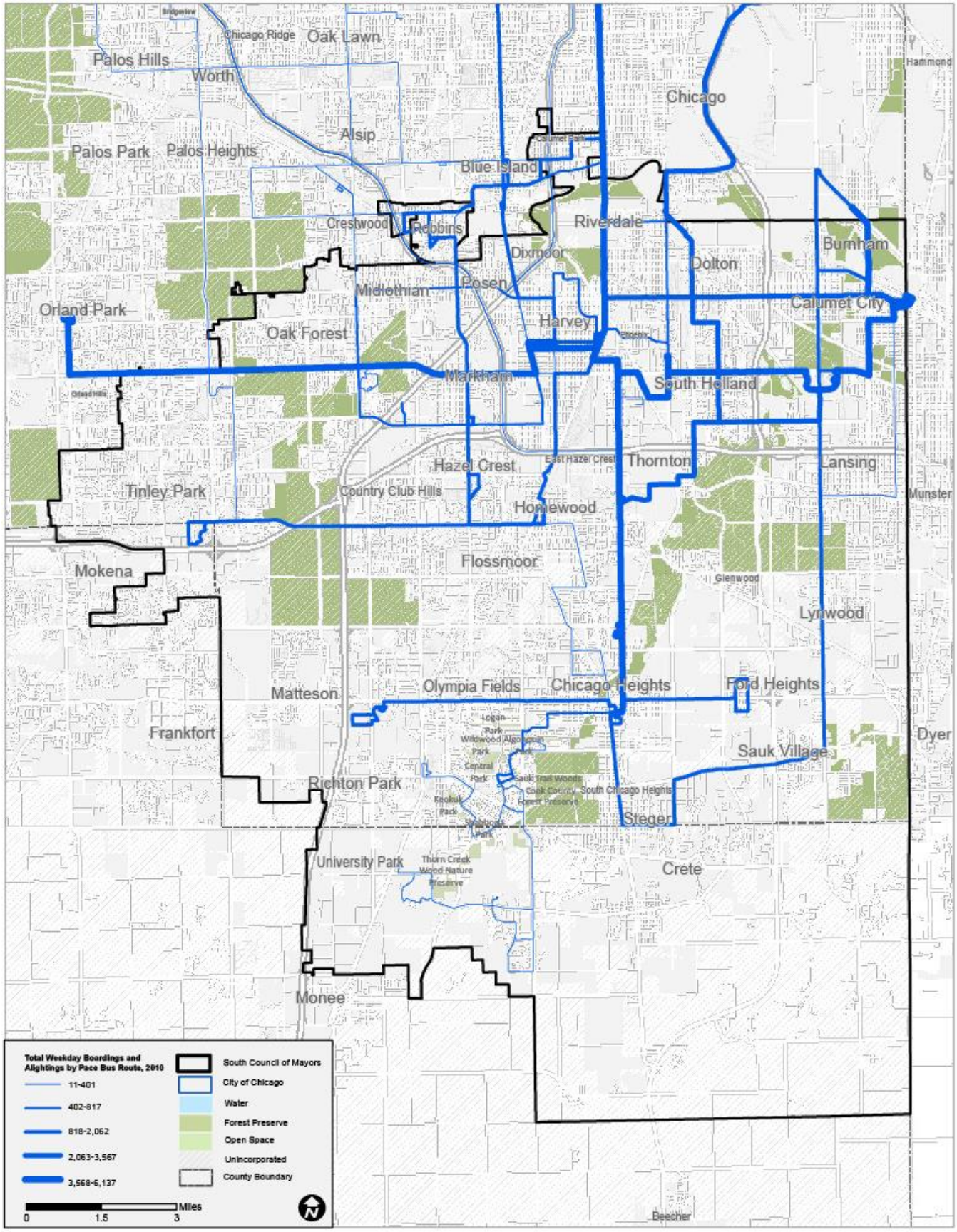
2.5.2 Pace Suburban Bus

Twenty-four Pace suburban bus routes directly serve and have stops within the South Council. Noticeably lacking are routes in Crete, Glenwood, and the western part of Matteson. As shown in Figure 2.18, relatively little of these communities are within 0.25-mile of a (fixed route) Pace bus stop, and the portion of the South Council within Will County lacks transit service overall. According to Pace analysis,[28] low population density and low demand for transit service predominates in these areas. Pace provides local demand-responsive service and ADA Paratransit in these areas. Commuter parking facilities, including Homewood Park-n-Ride, South Holland Park-n-Ride, Harvey Transportation Center, Pace South Division, and Burlington Coat Factory (Tinley Park), provide links to Pace bus service. The entire Pace vehicle fleet is ADA compliant, and all full-size, fixed route buses are equipped with front-loading bike carriers so that Pace users can access the bus via bicycle.

Pace routes are designed to bring people from these communities to Metra stations, shopping centers, health centers, and schools. As mentioned above, thirteen routes run within, or largely within, the boundary of the South Council, while the remaining eleven routes connect areas within the South Council to the north (City of Chicago and Midway Airport) and northwest (southwestern and western suburbs in Cook and DuPage Counties). The routes linking to outer areas are located exclusively in the northern and central portions of the South Council.

[28] See the "South Cook County - Will County Initiative, which encompasses 82 communities in Will County and south and southwest Cook County, at http://www.pacebus.com/sub/initiatives/south_cook_will/scw_default.asp. Goals of the initiative include aligning Pace service with current travel needs and demographics, improving service reliability and developing new transit options beyond fixed bus routes. Pace is working closely with communities, businesses, its customers, regional transportation and planning organizations and social service agencies to ensure that service changes will meet area needs.

Figure 2.25 Pace Bus Routes - Ridership



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Tinley Park Call-n-Ride Service

As mentioned above, Pace also offers a Call-n-Ride public transportation service for the general public traveling anywhere within the designated service area (bounded by the Metra Rock Island District line, I-80, 80th Avenue, 191st Street, Oak Park Avenue, 183rd Avenue, and Veterans Parkway, with service to Moraine Valley SW Education Center and Orland Square Mall). The service, which runs only on weekdays, is $1.75 per one-way trip. Clients must call to reserve a trip at least one hour in advance, and can also call one day ahead to schedule a trip. The service is wheelchair accessible. Drivers accept cash and Ventra cards, and transfers to/from Pace fixed routes buses are possible (for $0.25). The service has timed stops at the downtown Metra station from 6:40 AM to 6:33 PM.

Other Demand-responsive Services

Pace bus also offers, throughout its service area, demand responsive transit service, including ADA Paratransit Services, Ride Share, and Vanpool service.

ADA Paratransit Services

Pace ADA Paratransit Service is a curb-to-curb, dial-a-ride service for individuals with disabilities who cannot use the fixed route system. ADA is provided within three quarters of a mile on each side of fixed service bus routes. Eligibility is determined by the Regional Transportation Authority, more information may be found at the Pace ADA website: http://www.rtachicago.org/accessibility/ada-paratransit-service-guidelines.html.

Pace Ride Share and Vanpool

Pace Ride Share is a free service that connects commuters throughout the Chicagoland area who are interested in sharing their drive to work. The website for the program gives travelers in northeastern Illinois the ability to identify potential carpool partners quickly and securely. By registering for the program, customers gain access to a list of people who live and work nearby and who have similar schedules and personal preferences. The program allows participants to contact potential carpoolers by email to discuss needs and expectations. More information is available at: https://www.pacerideshare.com/.

The Vanpool Program is designed to offer commuters an economical, convenient alternative to driving alone by providing vans to groups of 5-13 commuters. The cost of the van, fuel, maintenance, insurance, tolls, roadside assistance and van washes are included and paid for from the monthly fees of the riders ($58 per month). More information can be found at: http://www.pacebus.com/sub/vanpool/default.asp.

2.6 Safety

Safety and the perception of safety are important elements in people's decisions to walk or bike. Wide roads, high speed limits, and lack of sidewalks all negatively impact the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Moreover, unsafe conditions that result in crashes can have the immeasurable consequences of incapacitating injury or death. Safety conditions vary throughout the study area and for different types of roadway users; however, improvements in safety conditions would benefit all types of users.

Pedestrians and bicyclists are particularly vulnerable to high speed traffic. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC), "Vehicle speed is a major factor in all types of crashes and has especially serious consequences for people on foot. Where the posted speed limit was recorded, 61.3 percent of pedestrian fatalities [nationally] were on roads with a speed limit of 40 mph or higher. This figure compares to just 9 percent of fatalities that occurred on roads with speed limits less than 30 mph."[29] Higher speeds result in higher fatality rates, as a pedestrian is much more likely to survive a crash when the car is traveling at 20 mph or slower (Figure 2.26).

Figure 2.26 Why Speed Matters

Image courtesy of City of Seattle Vision Zero Plan. http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/beSuperSafe/VisionZeroPlan.pdf

Nationwide, more than half of pedestrian fatalities studied by NCSC occurred on arterial roadways. Often, these roadways are high capacity arterials intended to move large amounts of vehicular traffic as efficiently as possible. These statistics seem to hold true for the south suburbs and the South Council area as well. The following section describes crashes in the study area, the estimated level of stress of local roadways for bicyclists, and other safety concerns.

A potential crash is not the only safety concern that influences decisions regarding which mode of transportation one uses, whether it's driving, taking transit, biking, or walking. A fear of crime and physical harm (not related to traffic) can also influence people's mode choice. Lighting conditions and the presence or absence of other people on the street can impact those perceptions. In this report, we do not analyze crime data and we do not have data regarding perceptions of physical safety in the study area. Yet this is a factor to be considered when trying to increase the percentage of travelers who choose not to drive.

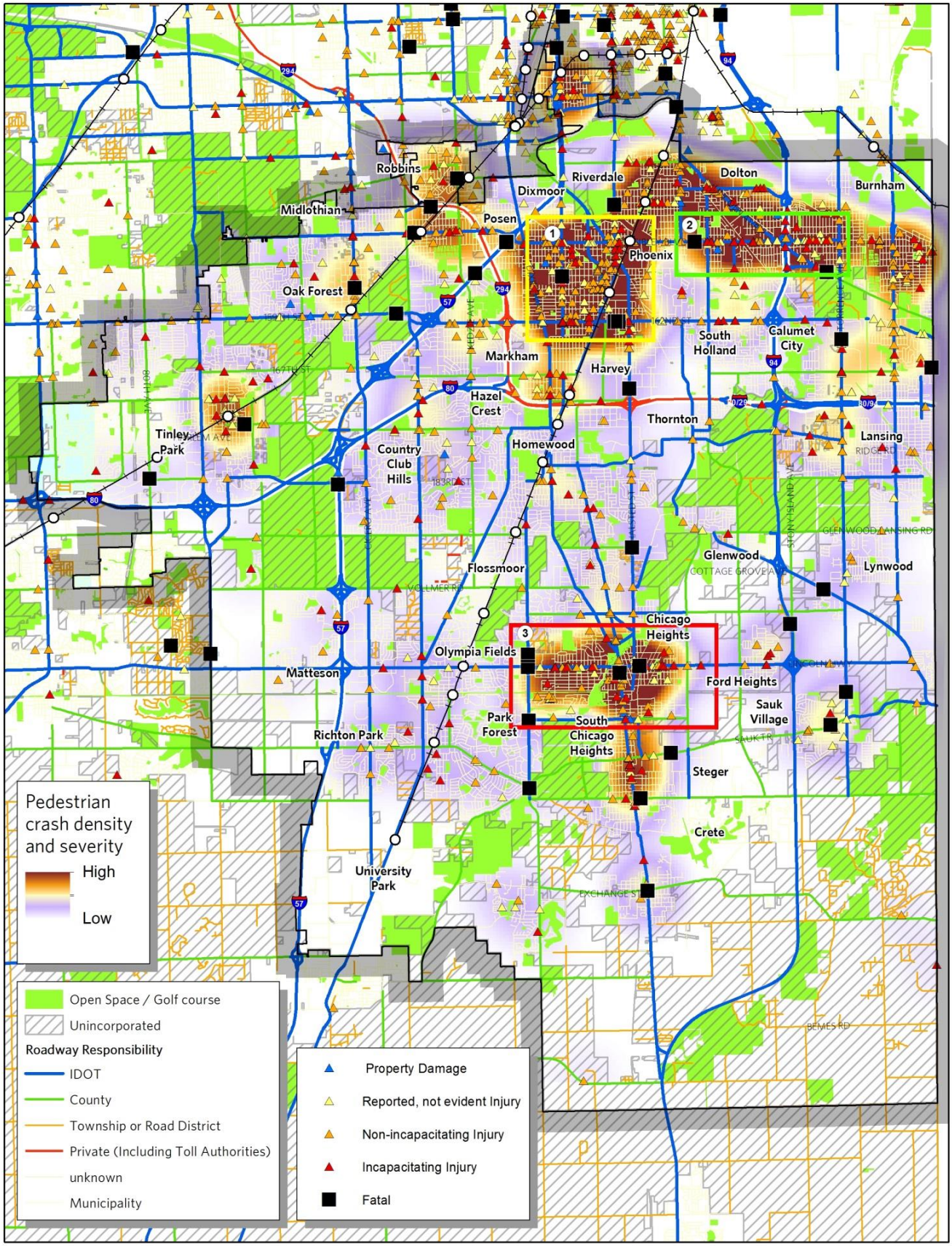
Pedestrian crashes

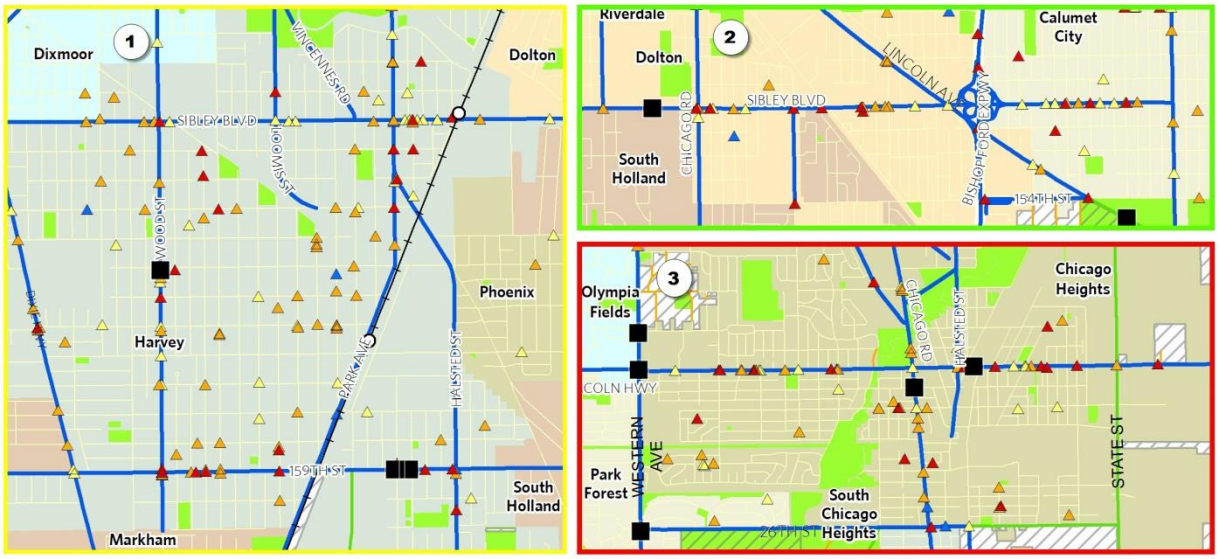
[29] National Complete Streets Coalition. "Dangerous by Design," May 2014. Online: www.smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-bydesign.

Among South Council communities, the City of Harvey and the City of Chicago Heights have noticeably high concentrations of pedestrian crashes (crash data from 2008-2012). These concentrations may or may not reflect the overall crash risk; they could be a result of having more pedestrians overall and having unsafe conditions. Over 15% of all the pedestrian crashes in the South Council of Mayors area are within the City of Harvey, and over 10% are in the City of Chicago Heights.

Roadway corridors with high numbers of crashes include: Sibley Boulevard from Calumet City to Midlothian (74 crashes), Lincoln Highway and Chicago Road (31 crashes on each of these in Chicago Heights alone), and 159th Street from Calumet City through Oak Forest and Tinley Park (54 crashes). Western Avenue from Olympia Fields south through Park Forest has a high number of fatal pedestrian crashes, with few other crashes. The following map shows the locations of crashes involving pedestrians from 2008 to 2012, with a gradient background measuring the density of crashes as well as the severity of crashes. Brown to orange areas indicate a high density of crashes and severe crashes. Light purple to white areas have low levels of crashes. Following the main map are more detailed maps of high crash areas and images from Google Streetview showing some of the roads that exhibit high numbers of pedestrian crashes.

Figure 2.27 Pedestrian Crashes





Figures 2.28 and 2.29 Pedestrians crossing Sibley Boulevard (IL-83) in Calumet City and Harvey

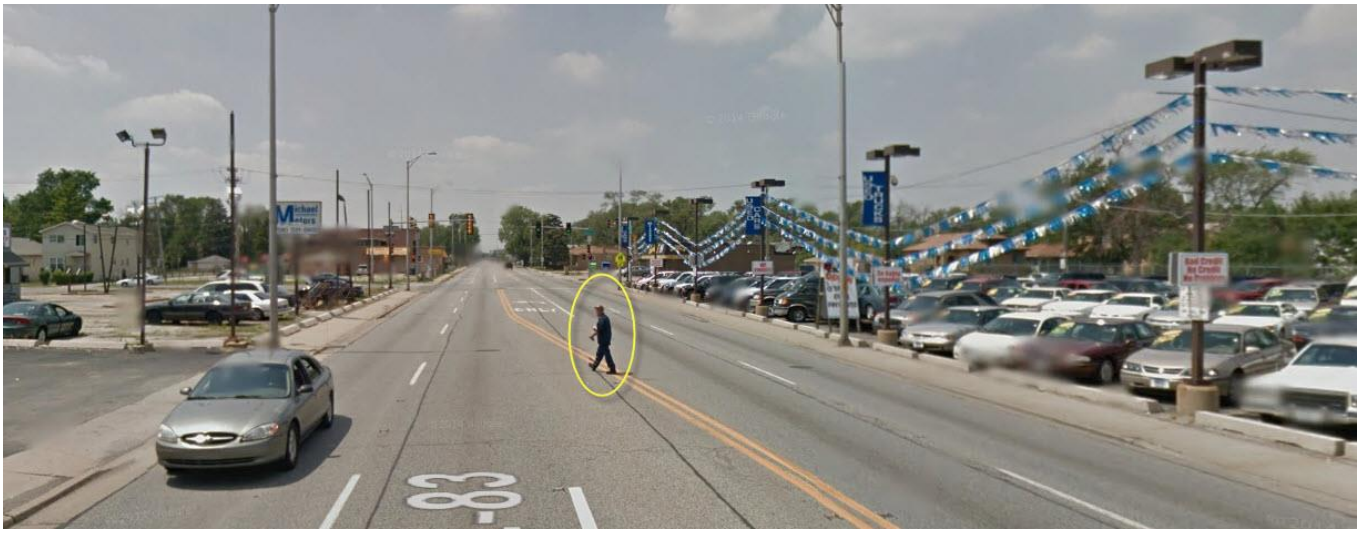


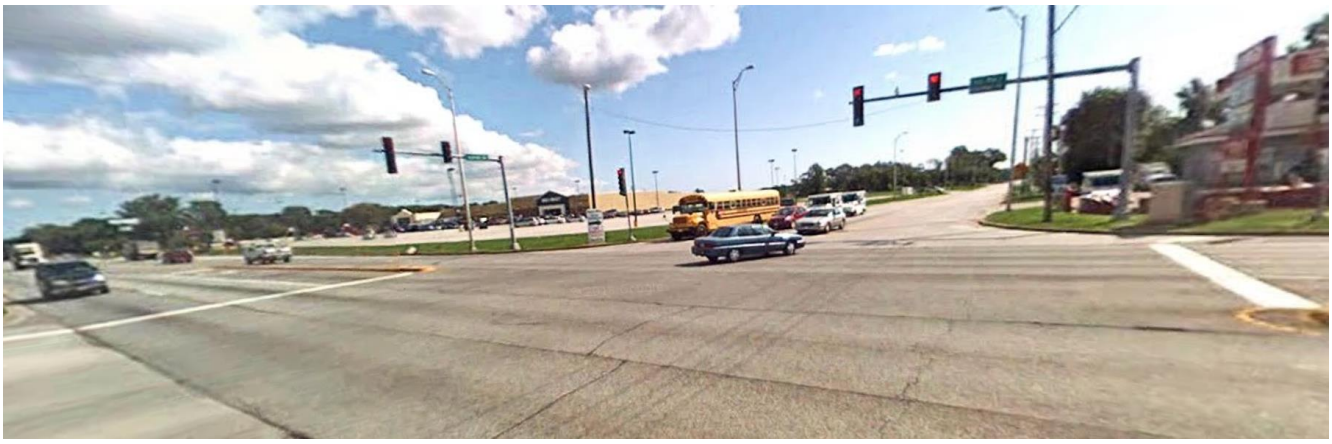
Figure2.30 Lincoln Highway in Chicago Heights

Figure 2.31 159th Street in Harvey

There were 35 fatal pedestrian crashes in the South Council area between 2008 and 2012. Nearly 75 percent of these crashes occurred along roadways under IDOT's jurisdiction. Twenty-five percent of the fatal crashes occurred along County roads. Two pedestrians were killed at the intersection of Holbrook Road (County jurisdiction) and Halsted Street (IDOT jurisdiction), near the Glenwood Wal-Mart. Despite the fact that there are Pace bus stops at this intersection, there are no sidewalks or marked crossings. In order to address

pedestrian safety issues in South Council communities, it is imperative that IDOT (and other transportation agencies) be engaged and included in the early stages for roadway planning to improve roadway safety.

Figures 2.32 and 2.33 Intersection of Holbrook Road and Halsted Street (Google Streetview & Google Maps)



Bicycle crashes

When bicyclists and motor vehicle drivers share the road, many factors affect safety, including the speed and volume of traffic, and the width of the road, vehicle types, visibility, and vehicle operator behavior. The perception of safety is very important to developing a robust cycling community; most people will not ride a bicycle if they don't think that doing so is fundamentally safe. The mere presence of bicyclists on the roadway, as a regular, ordinary feature of the road, can significantly increase overall safety, as drivers come to expect and anticipate bicyclists. When it is not feasible to create off-street paths or barrier-protected bike lanes, certain roadway designs and treatments can help to improve the safety of the road for cyclists and other users.

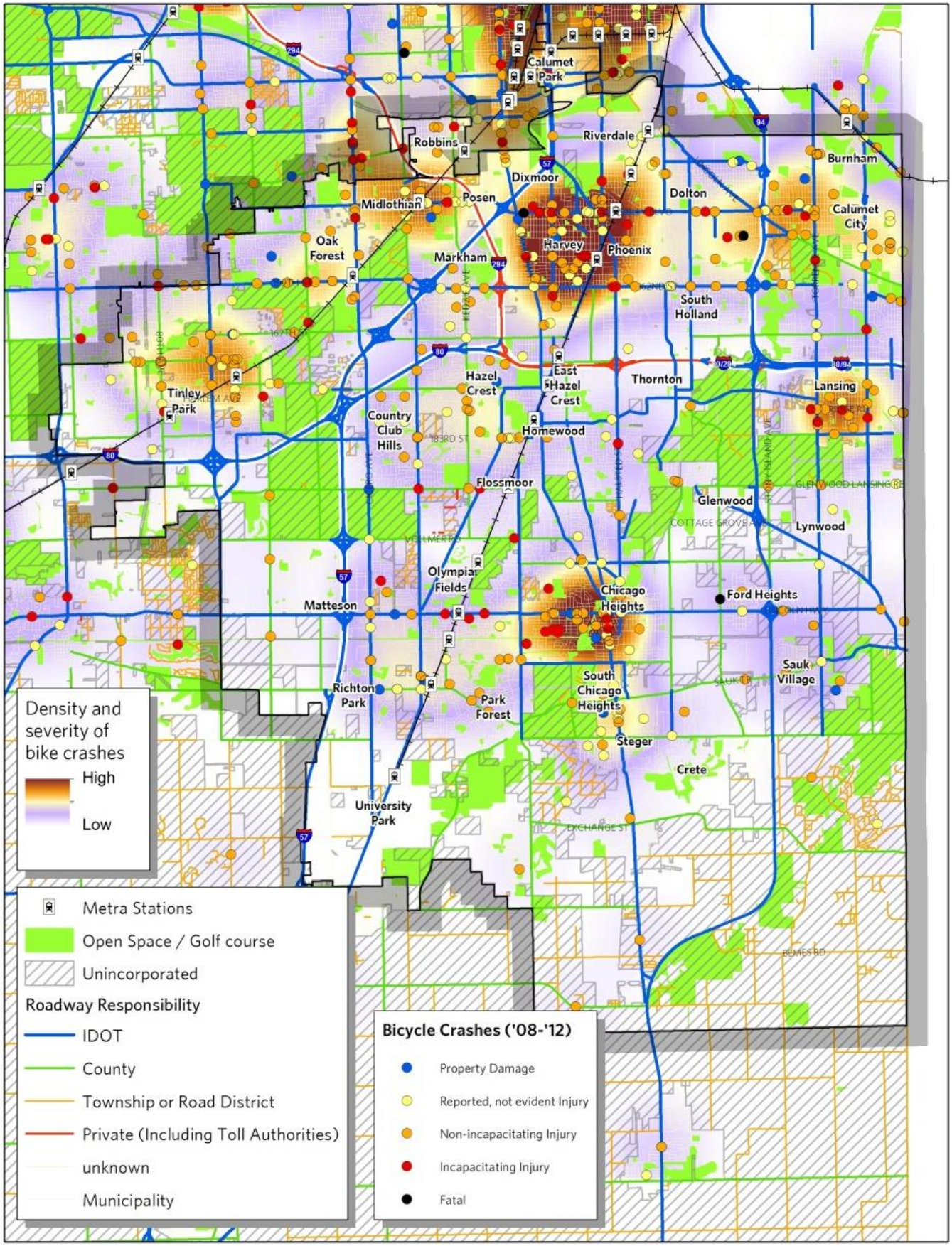
The large and busy arterial roads present the greatest issues for cyclists. For five years of bicyclist crash data (2008-2012), the majority of crashes, particularly those resulting in an incapacitating injury, occurred on arterial roads. For these five years, approximately 62 out of 105 incapacitating injury bicycle crashes (59 percent) occurred along arterials. During this period, there were 3 fatal bicycle crashes, one of which occurred on a major arterial in Harvey, and the other two on collector streets in Dolton and Ford Heights.

Figure 2.34 shows the locations of bicycle crashes in the south suburban study area. It also indicates the relative density of crashes, with dark brown indicating areas of higher crash concentrations and severity of crashes. Purple to white areas indicate lower concentrations of crashes. Since we do not know how many people are riding bicycles along all routes (which would require on-going, consistently-administered counts), we cannot determine the relative risk of any given area. However, certain locations stand out as problematic. Again, the communities of Harvey and Chicago Heights both have relatively high densities of crashes. Chicago Heights had 6 incapacitating injury crashes on local roads. Other locations with multiple bicycle crashes include:

- Sibley Boulevard in Dixmoor and Harvey, between Dixie Highway and Halsted Street – 10 bicycle crashes, one fatal
- Chicago Road South of Lincoln Highway in Chicago Heights – 6 bicycle crashes
- Signalized intersection at Greenwood Road and 154th Street in Dolton – one fatal bicycle crash
- Cottage Grove Road in Ford Heights – one fatal bicycle crash

Referring back to the Strava map of cyclists' routes, Figure 2.11 shows that Strava riders nearly completely bypass the hotspots of bicycle crashes, indicating that people who have a choice avoid cycling in those areas.

Figure 2.34 Bicycle Crashes



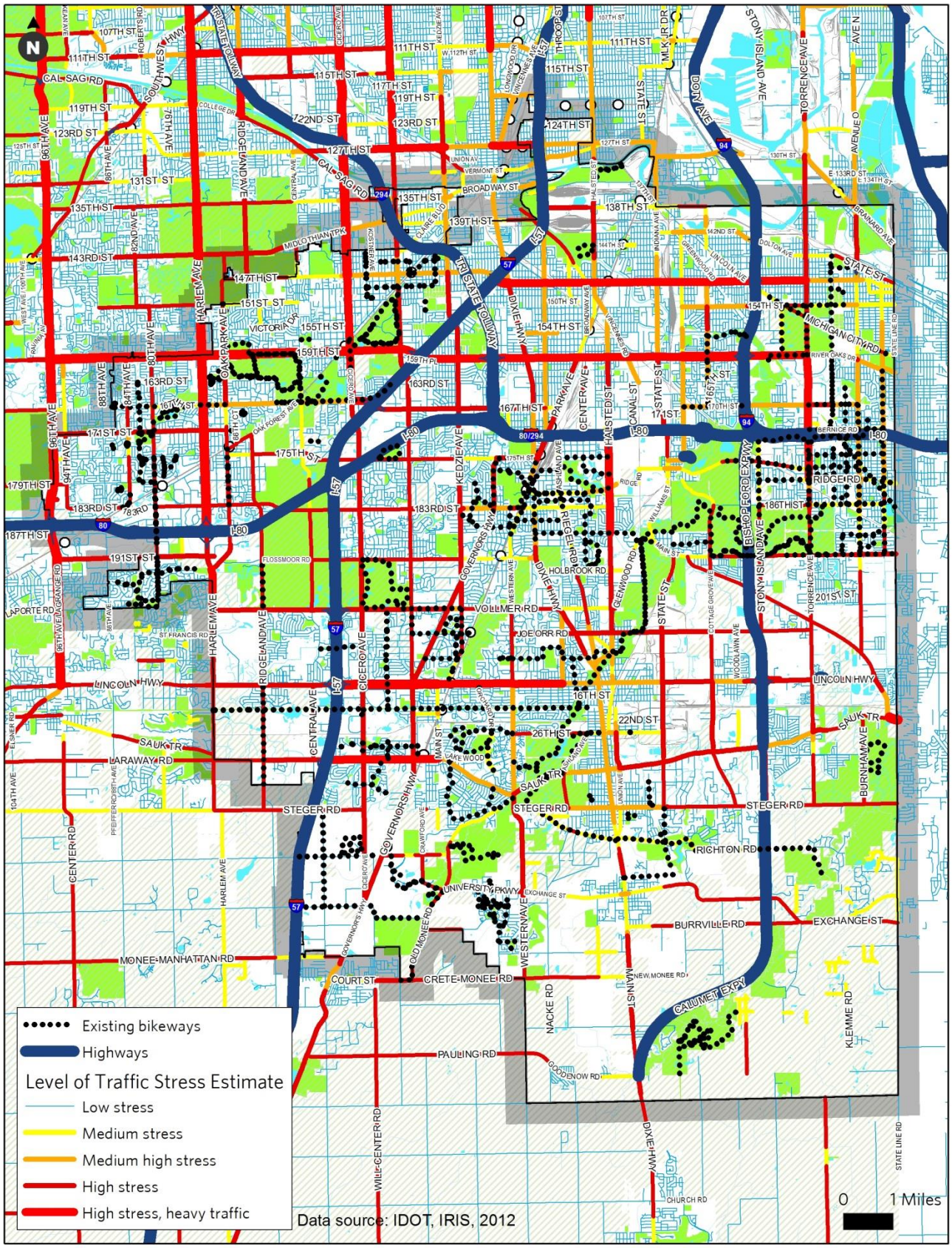
Level of Traffic Stress

According to a 2012 report from the Mineta Transportation Institute, a highly connected, low-stress network is fundamental to attract the highest numbers of bicyclists to the network.[30] The method developed to measure traffic stress considers a number of factors, including the average daily traffic (ADT), the number of travel lanes, posted speed limits, and location of the center line. For streets where bicyclists and cars share the road, street width and speed limit are the primary factors affecting traffic stress. The ratings aim to estimate the level of stress that a bicyclist would feel while riding along different routes, without the need to survey every road in the study area. Using available data, Figure 2.35 measures the Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) on the roadways in the study area.

Most residential streets appear as low-stress (LTS 1 or 2), with exceptions being major arterial roadways and collectors. As mentioned previously, the South Council area is extensively crisscrossed with interstate highways and large major arterial roads that create barriers to connectivity and funnel all traffic to a limited number of crossings, which can increase both the stress and the inconvenience experienced by bicyclists. When considering the challenges of traveling throughout the South Council on bicycle, it is notable that there are very few designated bikeways for east-west travel. In the far south of the Council, the Old Plank Rail Trail through Matteson and Park Forest (currently being extended into Chicago Heights) and connecting routes from Homewood to Lansing, but there are many areas within the South Council area that are without safe, convenient bikeway connections and have many high-stress routes. These conditions will limit the number of people who are willing to ride a bicycle, even for short trips.

[30] Mekuria, M. C., Furth, P. G., and Nixon, H. 2012. Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity. San Jose: Mineta Transportation Institute. Online: http://transweb.sjsu.edu/PDFs/research/1005-low-stress-bicycling-network-connectivity.pdf.

Figure 2.35 Level of Traffic Stress



Motor vehicle crashes

Of the nearly 30,000 car crashes that occurred in the South Council of Mayors area between 2010 and 2012, the majority occurred on IDOT roads or municipal roads, with over 5,000 at intersections of the two. This statistic is not surprising, as most roads in the study area fall into one of those two categories. Again, Sibley Boulevard stands out as a particularly dangerous road, and the intersection of Sibley Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue (just west of Interstate 94 (Bishop Ford Freeway) in the Village of Dolton has an especially high number of crashes. The I-94 interchange at Sibley Boulevard had 5 fatal crashes.

Other areas with higher densities of auto crashes include:

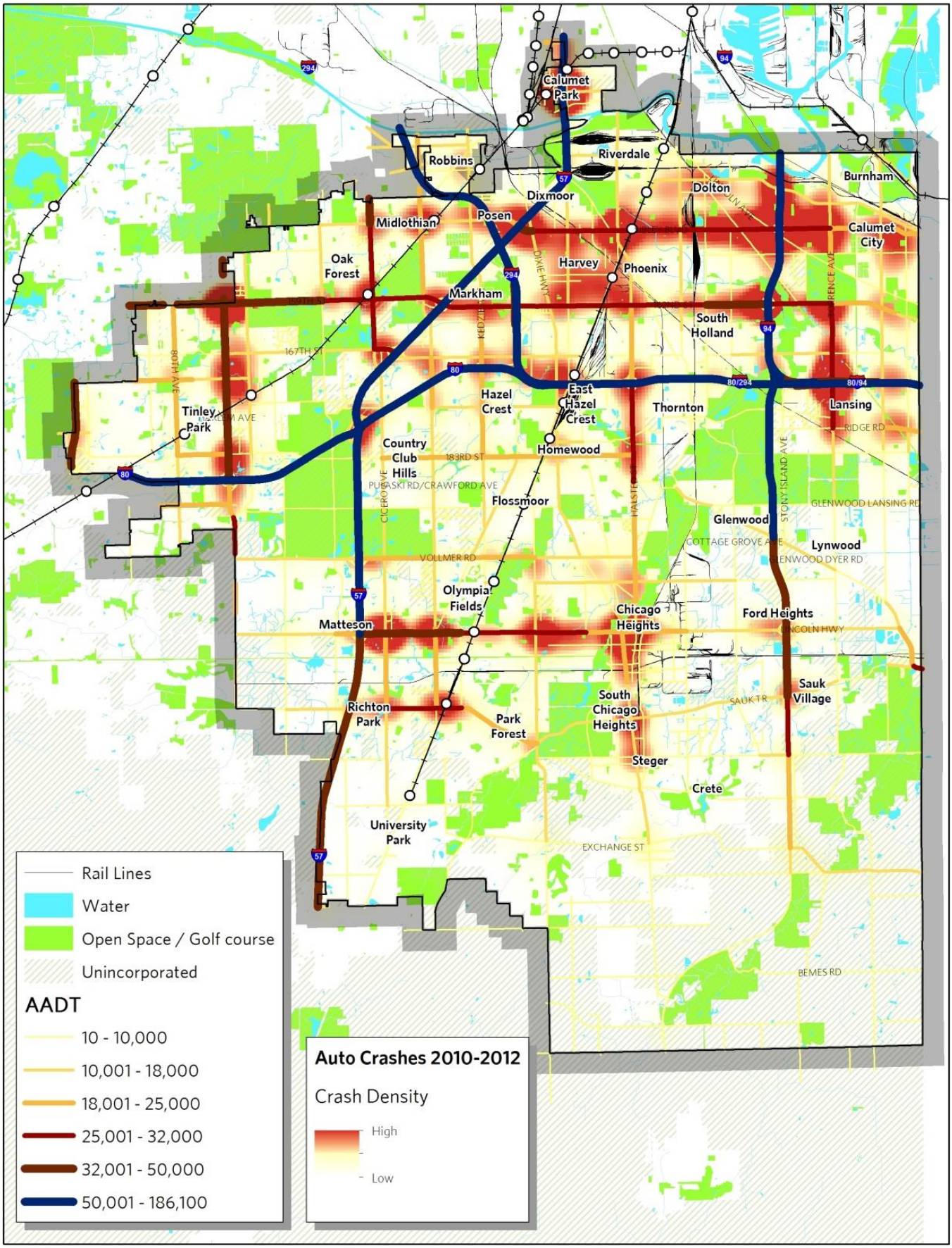
- Chicago Heights, south of 211th Street
- Harvey between Dixie Highway, Sibley Boulevard, and the railway
- the northern part of Calumet City
- Riverdale, between Halsted, 138th, Indiana, and Sibley Blvd
- Calumet Park

Five intersections in the South COM area had 20 or more crashes:

- Cicero Avenue and Lincoln Highway in Matteson (32 motor vehicle crashes)
- Cicero Avenue and 159th Street in Oak Forest (26 motor vehicle crashes)
- Torrence Avenue and 159th Street in Calumet City (22 motor vehicle crashes)
- I-57 and 127th Street in Calumet Park (22 motor vehicle crashes)
- Cicero Avenue and Sauk Trail in Richton Park (20 crashes)

When comparing the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of the roadways in the study area, one would expect to see higher crashes along roads with higher AADT. One exception to this is highways, which do not have intersections, where most crashes occur. This is not the case when comparing Harlem Avenue in Tinley Park with Sibley Boulevard or 211th Street in Chicago Heights (Figure 2.36). Harlem Avenue has higher AADT levels, and the crashes are concentrated around intersections. Sibley Boulevard and 211th Street have high crashes and medium AADT levels. Another interesting comparison is 159th Street, which has AADT rates comparable to Sibley Boulevard (higher in some places), but with fewer traffic crashes.

Figure 2.36 Density of Auto Crashes with AADT (2010- 2012)



In a 2007 analysis of speed limit compliance by CMAP[31], Lincoln Highway, Halsted St., and Harlem Avenue were found to have excessive speeding, more so in Cook County than in Will County. CMAP is in the process of compiling updated information on speed limit compliance for the region and that data will be analyzed when it becomes available.

Primary Service	**Functional Classification**	**Roadway examples**	**AADT high**	**Average AADT**	**Approximate miles in Study area**
Through traffic movement 	**Interstate**	I-57, I-94, I-80, I-294	186,000	55,661	95
	Freeway or Expressway	IL-394	72,300	31,524	10
	Principal Arterial	Sibley Blvd, Lincoln Highway, 159th St, Halsted St, Cicero Ave, Harlem Ave	40,500	23,779	88
	Minor Arterial	Volmer Rd, Kedzie Ave., Glenwood Dyer Rd, Sauk Trail, State St., Western Ave, Wood St.	28,600	13,174	196
	Collector (minor & major)	Lincoln Ave, Stony Island Ave, Richton Rd, Flossmoor Rd, Wentworth Ave, 138th St	22,400	6,240	229
Local trips & property access	**Local**	All other streets			1,637

[31] See CMAP's Technical Reports: http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/publications-and-archive/technical-reports.

Chapter 3: Surface Transportation Planning Program

This section provides basic background information on the South Council STP programming process and methodology and on currently programmed roadway improvements within the South Council area (sponsored by the South Council of Mayors and other transportation agencies). The section also provides a brief overview of the federal rules that control Categorical Exclusions, since these rules can allow for streamlined approval processes for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access projects. This background information is important given that one aspect of the current project will be to examine the South Council of Mayors' methodology for programming STP funds, and provide recommendations for revising the methodology to advance a Complete Streets approach through the programming process.

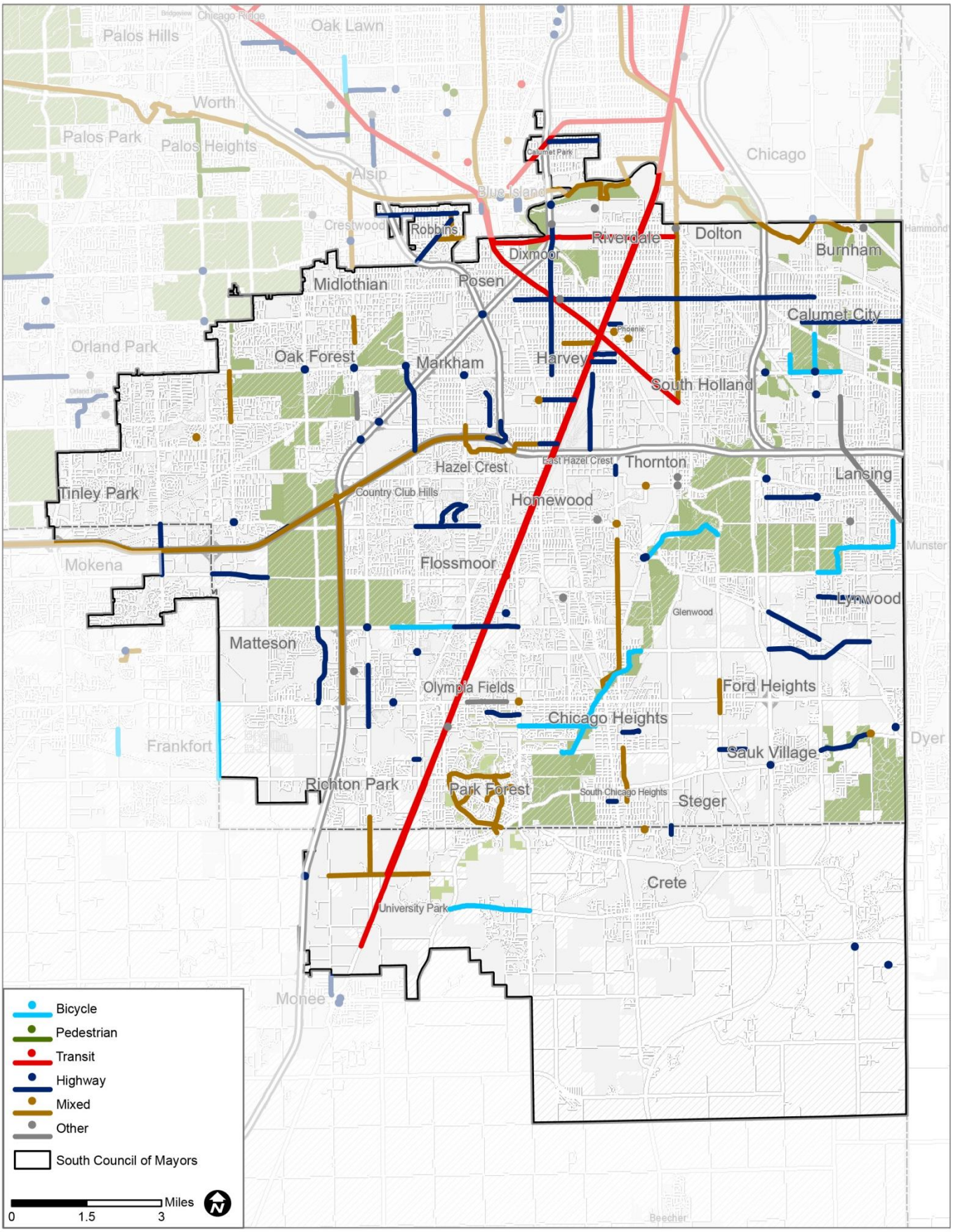
3.1 Planned and Programmed Roadway Improvements

Like many areas in our region, the South Council faces the ongoing challenge of maintaining and improving its transportation infrastructure. To address transportation maintenance and modernization, the South Council's Planning Liaison coordinates the implementation of locally sponsored, federally funded projects which are maintained in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) database. The TIP is a six-year agenda of surface transportation projects throughout northeastern Illinois, as well as a tool for communication between different levels of government and the general public regarding regional transportation needs. Other sponsoring agencies may have projects in the TIP that are within South Council boundaries.

Projects in the TIP are displayed in Figure 3.1 by major improvement category (bicycle, pedestrian, transit, highway, mixed, and other). For Fiscal Years 2014-2019, the TIP includes several bicycle projects within the South Council, including the Sand Ridge Bicycle Trail, a 1.3-mile long paved trail connecting the existing Burnham Greenway Trail to the Sand Ridge Nature Center in the communities of South Holland, Lansing, and Calumet City. While no pedestrian projects are planned within the South Council boundaries during this timeframe, funds budgeted for Mixed projects include building new pedestrian facilities, landscaping, and installing safety lighting. Transit projects make up a small portion of the TIP, but include rail line improvements to Thornton Junction and maintenance of the commuter parking lot at the 147th Street (Sibley Boulevard) Metra station in Harvey.

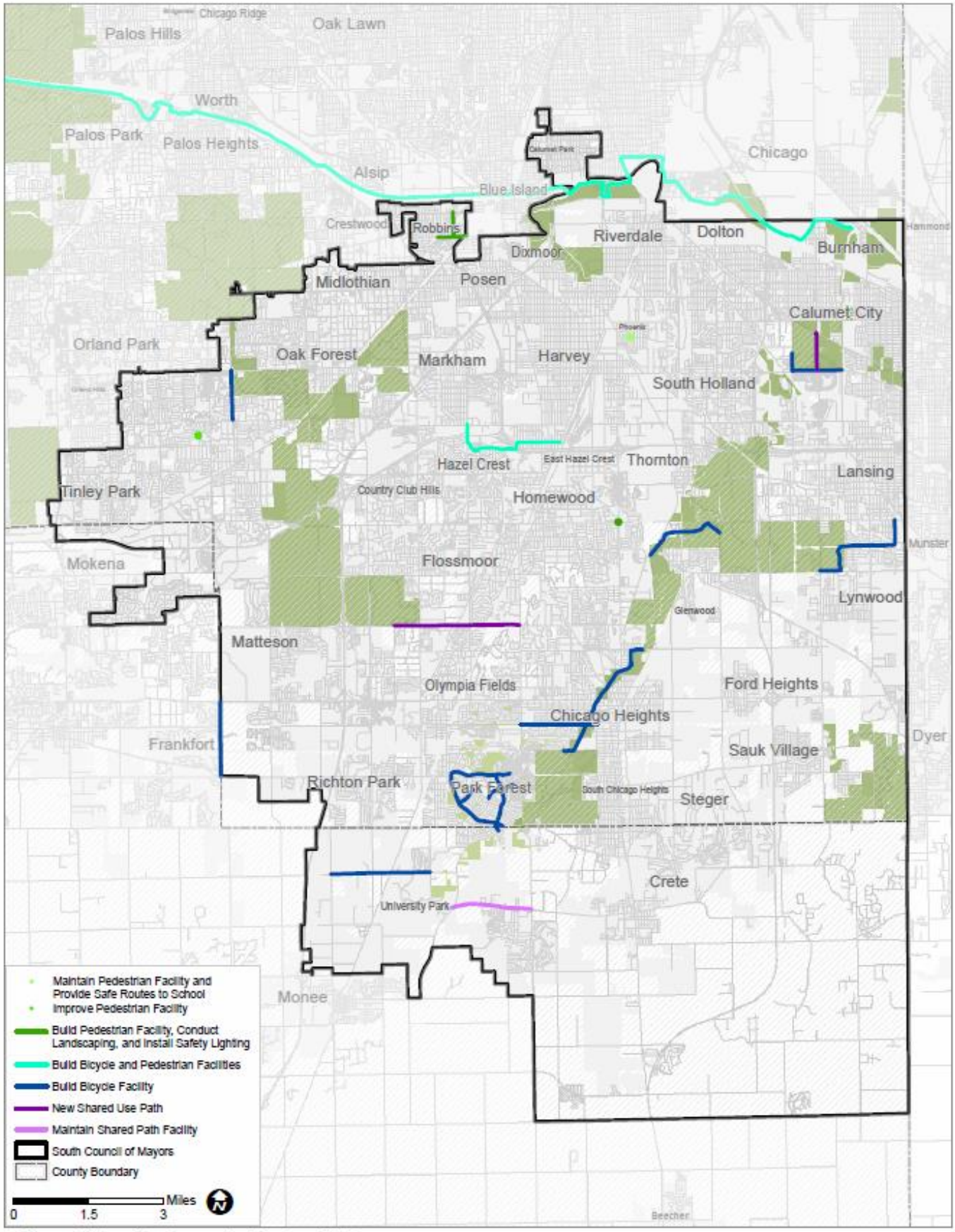
Figure 3.2 highlights the various types of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the TIP database. The South Council of Mayors sponsors over half of these projects, including a new shared use path along Vollmer Road from Kedzie Avenue and Western Avenue in Olympia Fields and Flossmoor, and a bicycle facility along University Parkway from Crawford Avenue to Central Avenue in University Park. Other projects may be sponsored by IDOT, County DOTs, Forest Preserve Districts, individual municipalities, or CMAP. "Active" projects have been entered in the database, but are not yet approved and "Awarded" projects are complete and have had all funding awarded.

Figure 3.1 TIP Projects, 2014-2019



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

Figure 3.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian TIP Projects, 2014-2019



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

3.2 SSMMA STP Programming Methodology

SSMMA Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides federal funding primarily for roadway projects in the jurisdiction. The funding is typically disbursed with a 30% local match, although some projects can have a 20% local match. All project phases (for most types of projects) are eligible for STP funding including:

- Phase 1 Engineering (Preliminary Engineering)
- Phase 2 Engineering (Design Engineering)
- Right-of-Way Acquisition
- Construction
- Phase 3 Engineering (Construction Engineering)

Projects are selected based on a point system that takes into account the following criteria (full table in Appendix):

- Traffic volumes – The greater the volume, the higher the number of points (maximum of 20)
- Road condition – The worse the condition, the higher the number of points (maximum of 20)
- Project readiness – The shorter the anticipated time to project letting, the higher the number of points (maximum of 25)
- Safety – The higher above IDOT's average crash rate for roadway type, the higher the number of points (maximum of 20)
- Air quality/ Transportation Control Measures (TCM) – Reduction in VMT receives most points (12); reduction in emissions with significant traffic flow improvements receive next most points (8); reduction in emissions with moderate traffic flow improvements and projects accommodating bicyclists receive next most points (4)
- Roadway jurisdiction – Projects on local roads receive 8 points; projects on county or state roads receive 4 points.

The most relevant aspect[32] of the STP programming methodology for Complete Streets or bicycle or pedestrian projects is the Air Quality/TCM criteria. TCM projects aimed at improving air quality through reducing or modifying automobile usage (VMT) are eligible for STP funds and may be sponsored by a municipality or transportation agency. These can include capital costs of improved public transit, creation of bus-only lanes or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bike or pedestrian infrastructure (including bicycle parking and storage facilities), and ordinances or programs to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel. Roadway lighting projects, which can improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, are also eligible (except for decorative or historic lighting fixtures).

[32] Current South Council programming methodology also includes "safety," which is potentially highly relevant to Complete Streets / bicycle and pedestrian projects. However, the methodology's definition of safety – i.e. how 'safety' comes into play when evaluating project proposals for funding – does not clearly distinguish bicycle and pedestrian safety issues or allow programmers to incorporate a project's ability to address such issues into project rankings.

The full list of projects eligible for TCM funding in the South Council of Mayors is as follows:

TRANSPORTATION CONTROL MEASURES ELIGIBLE FOR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM FUNDING

1. Programs for improved public transit (capital only)
2. Restriction of certain roads or lanes to or construction of such roads or lanes for use by passenger buses or high occupancy vehicles (HOV)
3. Employer-based transportation management plans, including incentives
4. Trip reduction ordinances
5. Traffic flow improvement programs that achieve emission reductions
6. Fringe and transportation corridor parking facilities serving multiple occupancy vehicle programs or transit service
7. Programs to limit or restrict vehicle use in downtown areas or other areas of emission concentration particularly during periods of peak use
8. Programs for the provision of all forms of high occupancy, shared-rides services
9. Programs to limit portions of road surfaces or certain sections of the metropolitan area to the use of non-motorized vehicles or pedestrian use, both as to time and place
10. Programs for secure bicycle storage facilities and other facilities, including bicycle lanes, for the convenience and protection of bicyclists, in both public and private areas
11. Programs to control extended idling of vehicles
12. Employer-sponsored programs to benefit flexible work schedules
13. Programs and ordinances to facilitate non-automobile travel, provision and utilization of mass transit, and to generally reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle travel, as part of transportation planning and development efforts of a locality, including programs and ordinances applicable to new shopping centers, special events, and other centers of vehicle activity.
14. Programs for new construction and major reconstruction of paths, tracks or areas solely for the use by pedestrian or other non-motorized means of transportation when economically feasible and in the public interest.

OTHER ELIGIBLE NON-TRADITIONAL PROJECTS

1. Highway and transit safety improvements and programs, hazard elimination, projects to mitigate hazards caused by wildlife, railway-highway grade crossings, and “opticom” emergency vehicle preemption devices.
2. Highway and transit research and development and technology transfer programs
3. Capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs

3.3 Active Transportation Alliance Review of Council of Mayors STP Programming Methods[33]

As part of Cook County Department of Public Health and the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago's Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) initiative, Active Transportation Alliance published "Transportation and Health: How to Use Surface Transportation Program Funds to Create Active Living in Suburban Cook County" (2011). This report reviews the methods used by Cook County Councils of Mayors (COM) as compared to programming methodologies in Peoria, IL and Nashville, TN. The paper recommends updating the Councils' STP funding criteria to include active transportation infrastructure and public health considerations. Although the South Council's current STP criteria awards 4 points to projects that accommodate bicycles, this paper provides further recommendations for updating the awarding methodology.

The report derives the need for a change in STP funding methodology from challenges in public health. A correlation between active transportation and obesity rates is clear: bicycling and walking are two of the most important methods for reducing obesity. Infrastructure that helps make bicycling and walking viable transportation options has emerged as a key strategy in improving public health. Public health officials have recently started working with planners and engineers to create infrastructure that allows biking and walking to become viable transportation choices.

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), and (most recently, as part of MAP-21) the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) are currently the largest sources of funding for active transportation projects in the region. However, since these programs fund many different project types and are spread across the whole region and state, they do not provide a consistent and sustainable source of funding needed for significant progress in active transportation. ITEP allocates 10% of STP funds into a separately (state) administered program for roadway enhancements, which can include pedestrian and bike projects. Currently, the disbursement of ITEP/TAP funds by IDOT does not correspond to the amounts called for under the formula for suballocating TAP (and STP). This could be seen to result in some areas not receiving their full entitlement. Active Transportation Alliance's report recommends that COMs and others advocate for a more rational and transparent process for ITEP/TAP funding, including more programming control by MPOs for the ITEP/TAP funds that helps pay for projects in their communities.

Arguing that active transportation infrastructure projects do not have a sufficient dedicated funding source, the report advocates for integrating projects into existing funding mechanisms and programs such as Surface

[33] This section provides a summary of the Active Transportation Alliance's report, "Transportation and Health: How to Use Surface Transportation Program Funds to Create Active Living in Suburban Cook County". The ideas, viewpoints, and opinions on STP programming and project evaluation, which are expressed in the report and summarized here, are those of Active Transportation Alliance only and should not be ascribed to CMAP. They are presented here for information purposes and as background for future recommendations.

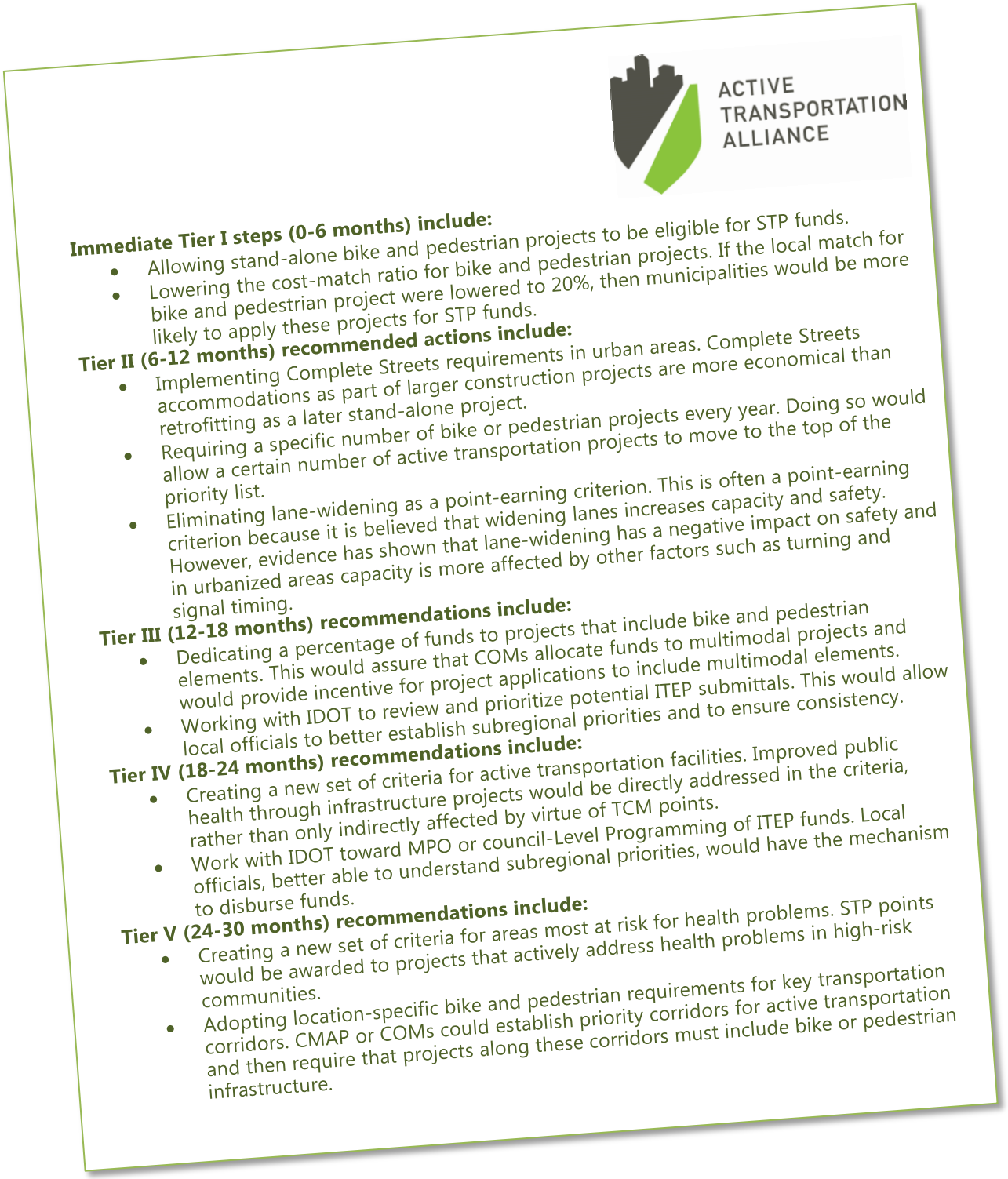
Transportation Program (STP). In the northeastern Illinois region, individual Councils of Mayors develop and apply methods for administering STP funds as well as criteria used to evaluate STP funding proposals from eligible sponsors in their sub-region. The criteria vary among the COMs, but all award more points to projects that they think will produce positive safety outcomes, or that are located along higher traffic count roads and regional arterials (with the goal of relieving congestion and providing more motor vehicle mobility). As of publication of the report, none of the criteria prioritized bike or pedestrian infrastructure, and some COMs did not allow STP funding for bike and pedestrian infrastructure that are not attached to another road improvement project. Since publication, the North Shore COM has changed its criteria to make projects with Complete Streets elements more likely to be funded.

Transportation Control measures (TCM) and air quality improvement evaluation are two forms in which active transportation projects can be incorporated into STP criteria. TCM points, however, typically make up a very small portion of the total potential points in the STP criteria and therefore may not be a particularly effective strategy for leveraging STP funds to advance active transportation projects.

Another approach, which the report explores and recommends, would be to award additional points for projects that promote positive health outcomes, as is done in Peoria, IL and Nashville, TN. The standards for STP in Peoria are similar to most Cook County COM criteria except the Peoria STP criteria include points for multimodal projects. New multimodal infrastructure or incorporation of connections between existing infrastructure can be awarded up to 10% of the total potential STP points. The Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (NAMPO) requires that 25% of all STP funding be applied to multimodal, or active transportation, projects (15% to bike and pedestrian and 10% to transit). Moreover, the NAMPO STP criteria include a “Health and Environment” category that is worth up to 10% of all possible points in an effort to address health inequities. Since NAMPO implemented these policies, 75% of projects that have been nominated to STP have included bike or pedestrian elements.

The report makes the case that Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are another potential tool for agencies charged with evaluating transportation projects. HIAs have been used in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. HIAs can be a powerful tool to inform decision makers and communicate information on the potential effects of policy decisions on public health, analogous to an Environmental Impact Assessment. However, the report notes that there is, at present, no universal framework for administering an HIA and doing so can be difficult and expensive.

Active Transportation Alliance's paper recommends that COMs take a tiered approach for reforming STP funding to support active transportation. The following recommendations are provided:



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE

Immediate Tier I steps (0-6 months) include:

- Allowing stand-alone bike and pedestrian projects to be eligible for STP funds.
- Lowering the cost-match ratio for bike and pedestrian projects. If the local match for bike and pedestrian project were lowered to 20%, then municipalities would be more likely to apply these projects for STP funds.

Tier II (6-12 months) recommended actions include:

- Implementing Complete Streets requirements in urban areas. Complete Streets accommodations as part of larger construction projects are more economical than retrofitting as a later stand-alone project.
- Requiring a specific number of bike or pedestrian projects every year. Doing so would allow a certain number of active transportation projects to move to the top of the priority list.
- Eliminating lane-widening as a point-earning criterion. This is often a point-earning criterion because it is believed that widening lanes increases capacity and safety. However, evidence has shown that lane-widening has a negative impact on safety and in urbanized areas capacity is more affected by other factors such as turning and signal timing.

Tier III (12-18 months) recommendations include:

- Dedicating a percentage of funds to projects that include bike and pedestrian elements. This would assure that COMs allocate funds to multimodal projects and would provide incentive for project applications to include multimodal elements.
- Working with IDOT to review and prioritize potential ITEP submittals. This would allow local officials to better establish subregional priorities and to ensure consistency.

Tier IV (18-24 months) recommendations include:

- Creating a new set of criteria for active transportation facilities. Improved public health through infrastructure projects would be directly addressed in the criteria, rather than only indirectly affected by virtue of TCM points.
- Work with IDOT toward MPO or council-Level Programming of ITEP funds. Local officials, better able to understand subregional priorities, would have the mechanism to disburse funds.

Tier V (24-30 months) recommendations include:

- Creating a new set of criteria for areas most at risk for health problems. STP points would be awarded to projects that actively address health problems in high-risk communities.
- Adopting location-specific bike and pedestrian requirements for key transportation corridors. CMAP or COMs could establish priority corridors for active transportation and then require that projects along these corridors must include bike or pedestrian infrastructure.

3.4 IDOT Categorical Exclusion Process and Rules

Locally funded transportation projects that utilize federal funding, such as STP, are processed through the IDOT District 1 Bureau of Local Roads and Streets. This process can be lengthy, often impeding project delivery. In part to address this issue, the FTA and FHWA recently published (2014) several joint final rules making revisions to the regulations that implement the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The revisions are aimed at streamlining the environmental review process for transit and roadway projects by establishing new guidance for categorical exclusions (CEs).[34] Projects that do not have a significant impact on the environment, either individually or cumulatively, and therefore do not require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, may qualify for a CE. Generally, applying a CE to a project assists in the ability to expedite project delivery, meaning the projects can be built sooner.

The CEs established in this rule were developed based on responses to a stakeholder survey and are intended to improve project delivery for small projects, such as bicycle and pedestrian projects. While existing federal regulations state that "the construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities" constitutes an action that "meets the criteria for CEs and normally does not require any further NEPA approvals," the new rules reinforce these regulations through the following changes/additions:

- **Acquisition, construction, maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvement or limited expansion of stand-alone recreation, pedestrian, or bicycle facilities, such as: a multiuse pathway, land, trail, or pedestrian bridge; and transit plaza amenities.** The term "stand-alone" means a facility that is capable of operating independently, and is used here to void including facilities that are part of larger proposed projects with the potential for significant environmental impacts. Additionally, transit plaza amenities are those features of a facility that add to its desirability as viewed by the traveling public, such as wayfinding signs, bike lockers, benches, and landscaping.
- **Activities designed to mitigate environmental harm that cause no harm themselves or to maintain and enhance environmental quality and site aesthetics, and employ construction best management practices, such as: noise mitigation activities; rehabilitation of public transportation buildings, structures, or facilities; retrofitting for energy or other resource conservation; and landscaping or re-vegetation.**

Additional actions which meet the criteria for a CE may be designated as CEs only after FTA approval. The applicant is required to submit documentation which demonstrates that the specific conditions or criteria for CEs are satisfied and that significant environmental effects will not result. The FTA provides examples of such actions, including "the construction of bicycle facilities within existing transportation right-of-way." By addressing bicycle and pedestrian projects and the need to streamline project approval and delivery processes, the new rules and guidance are relevant to the South Council of Mayors Complete Streets and Trails study and future project implementation.

[34] More information on final rulings related to the environmental review process and categorical exclusions can be found at http://www.fta.dot.gov/12347_15129.html.

IDOT describes local project processing, including Categorical Exclusions, in detail in the IDOT Bureau of Local Roads and Streets (BLRS) Manual, Chapter 19.[35] There are three types of CEs:

1. CE Group 1 (CE1, No PDR) – No Project Development Report (PDR) required; Categorical Exclusion Group 1 Form (BLR 19100) required.
2. CE Group 1 (CE1, With PDR) – Local Project Development Report (PDR) for Group I Categorical Exclusions and Design Approval Form (BLR 22211) required
3. CE Group 2 (CE2) – Local Project Development Report for Group II Categorical Exclusions and Design Approval Form (BLR 22210) required

Basic information on the typical requirements and eligibility for CE1 and CE2 is as follows:

CE1 projects (both types) are those with *no* potential for "unusual circumstances":

- No ROW acquisition (or very minimal)
- No geometric changes (or very minimal)
- No major environmental impacts

  - **CE1** projects *may* require preparation of a full or partial Project Development Report (PDR), as determined by the IDOT Field Engineers during the project kick-off meeting.
    - The following CE1 project types typically *do not* require a PDR: resurfacing, sidewalks (including ADA ramps), signals (new or modification), signage, lighting, landscaping, curb & gutter repair.
    - The following CE1 project types *do* require a PDR: Rural widen & resurface with no change in the number of lanes within the existing ROW; bicycle, pedestrian or shared use paths; at-grade highway/rail crossings; installation of parking; weaving, turning or climbing lanes within the existing ROW; other projects as may be determined by FHWA at a coordination meeting.
  - **CE1** projects with no report must submit Form BLR 19100 with a location map and typical sections. New sidewalks require plans/profiles. If applicable, environmental and special waste clearances must be attached. If the project is along or terminates at a state route, various IDOT bureaus must approve. Intersection improvements require an Intersection Design Study (IDS).
    - Form 19100 will be signed by the District Regional Engineer, approving the CE1 and granting Design Approval.
  - **CE1** projects requiring a report must submit a PDR using Form BLR 22211.
    - Form 22211 will be signed by the District Regional Engineer, approving the CE1 and granting Design Approval.
  - An Environmental Survey Request (ESR) is required whenever a project involves ROW (including easements), any in-stream work (including drainage structure run-around), or is located within or

[35] The BLRS Manual is available at http://www.idot.illinois.gov/assets/uploads/files/doing-business/manuals-split/local-roads-and-streets/toc.pdf. See also the BDE Manual, Chapter 23 at http://www.idot.illinois.gov/assets/uploads/files/doing-business/manuals-split/design-and-environment/bde-manual/Chapter%2023%20Categorical%20%20Exclusions.pdf.

adjacent to historic properties listed in (or eligible for) the National Register of Historic Places, wetlands or known locations of threatened or endangered species. (See IDOT BLRS Manual, Chapter 20). The ESR is submitted to IDOT electronically and results in Cultural, Biological, Wetland and Special Waste Clearances.

- A Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) is required if there is the potential for special waste impacts. (See IDOT BLRS Manual, Chapter 20)

CE2 projects are those are those *with* the potential for "unusual circumstances," but without a high likelihood for significant impacts on the environment.

- Unusual circumstances include: potential significant environmental impacts; substantial controversy on environmental grounds; significant impacts on 4(f) or historic properties.
- CE2 projects require individual approval by FHWA as CEs and require a Project Development Report (PDR) using form BLR 22210.
- Typical CE2 projects are bridge removal/replacement, adding through lanes, shifting alignments

- **CE2** projects begin with the IDOT and FHWA giving *approval to process* a project as a CE during a regularly scheduled coordination meeting. (IDOT District 1/FHWA Coordination Meeting agendas are posted on the CMAP TIP Programmer Resources webpage.) Once the appropriate environmental analyses are completed, FHWA must *approve* the CE determination.
- Environmental analyses typically begin with an Environmental Survey Request (ESR) to screen the project area for cultural, biological and wetland resources. The ESR is an online submittal made by the local agency/consultant.
- If the ESR reveals that there are obvious resource involvement(s) that could result in significant impacts, further analyses must be performed.
- Special studies include the following (see the IDOT BLRS Manual, Chapter 20):
    - Environmental Surveys
    - Section 4(f) Evaluations
    - Section 6(f) Land Conversion Requests
    - OSLAD Land Conversion Requests
    - Historic Preservation Compliance Documentation
    - Noise Analyses
    - Flood Plain Findings
    - Wetlands Analyses
    - Threatened and Endangered Species/Natural Areas Impact Assessments
    - Evaluations of Farmland Conversion Impacts
    - Air Quality Conformity Documentation
    - Air Quality Microscale Analysis
    - Special Waste

- An Environmental Survey Request (ESR) is required whenever a project involves ROW (including easements), any in-stream work (including drainage structure run-around), or is located within or adjacent to historic properties listed in (or eligible for) the National Register of Historic Places, wetlands or known locations of threatened or endangered species. (See IDOT BLRS Manual, Chapter 20). The ESR is submitted to IDOT electronically and results in Cultural, Biological, Wetland and Special Waste Clearances.
- A Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) is required if there is the potential for special waste impacts. (See IDOT BLRS Manual, Chapter 20).

Chapter 4: Looking Forward

The existing conditions report has identified key issues and opportunities that exist for bicycling, walking, and non-motorized access to transit in the South Council of Mayors area and among its member communities. The Complete Streets and Trails Plan will utilize this information to formulate recommendations aimed at enhancing conditions for bicycling and walking in the Council area, and identify potential changes to the Council's STP project evaluation methodology in order to promote funding of Complete Streets projects.

Key themes and topic areas of the project are identified in this section. It should be noted that the following summary does not include all the issues that will be addressed in the final Plan.

Support and advance the ongoing efforts of the South Council and member communities to improve conditions for bicycling, walking, and transit.

- The Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will help the Council to expand and improve the sub-regional bikeway network by identifying potential long-distance bikeway corridors, to prioritize non-motorized and multimodal projects for STP funding, and to encourage local jurisdictions to adopt Complete Streets policies and approaches to transportation decision-making.
- Since 2008, a number of South Council communities have completed bicycle, pedestrian, active transportation, transit station area plans, or plans combining these topics. In addition, a number of communities, as well as Cook County and the State of Illinois, have adopted and taken steps to implement Complete Streets policies. The Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will support these existing efforts and initiatives and, at the same time, expand and further develop them. Specifically, the Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will inventory and map the new, existing, and planned bicycle facilities in the South Council and use this updated information to identify potential regional bikeway corridors, as well as high-priority Complete Streets areas, with the goal of improving network connectivity and non-motorized access to important destinations, including major transit facilities.

Identify major gaps or barriers in the bicycle network.

- In addition to the on-street bikeway network, substantial progress has been made within the South Council area in expanding and connecting off-street or greenway trail systems. However, significant gaps still remain. Projects to complete these gaps should continue to be pursued. The Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will identify these projects and include recommendations to make connections, for example, between the Burhnam/Pennsy Greenway Trail and the Thorn Creek Trail in the Village of Lansing, between the northern and southern portions of the Tinley Creek Trail, between the Major Taylor Trail in Chicago and the Burnham Greenway (via the eastern section of the Cal-Sag Trail), as well as between communities in the northern portions of the South Council and the existing and future Cal-Sag Trail.

- Strengthen connections to neighboring communities' bikeway networks and to the larger region-wide trail network (beyond the South Council area). As is the case among South Council communities, a number of communities outside but neighboring the South Council area have recently created bicycle-pedestrian or active transportation plans. The plan update will identify future extensions of and important links between the existing and planned bikeways and trails in South Council and South Council communities and the regional trail system including connections to nearby forest preserve properties trails and to trails and other bikeways to the east in Indiana.
- The plan will identify strategies to mitigate the effects of major barriers such as expressways, multiple rail lines, freight-related infrastructure such as rail yards, rail-related industrial areas, and intermodal facilities.

Identify roadway safety improvements for pedestrian and bicycle crossings, according to roadway typologies.

- Some South Council communities, such as Chicago Heights and Harvey – as well as certain corridors (such as Sibley Boulevard and 159th Street/U.S. 6) and station areas (Tinley Park and 147th St. in Harvey) – have high concentrations of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Many arterial roadways within the South Council area present major challenges to travel by foot or by bicycle. Missing or narrow sidewalks directly adjacent to high-volume, high-speed travel lanes, long crossing distances, lack of marked crossings and of specific accommodation for bicyclists make these roadways very difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel along and to cross. The Plan will identify the types and locations of roads and intersections that should be targeted for improvements. Such improvements may include clearly visible and defined pedestrian crosswalks along with other engineering treatments to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, such as signage, additional markings, traffic calming, pedestrian countdown signals, bicycle and pedestrian detection devices and/or other countermeasures.
- Recommendations for improving non-motorized access to transit amenities will be an important part of the plan.

Recommend amenities and activities to support walking and biking in the South Council.

- Improve bike route signage and wayfinding. Many local, residential (low-volume, low-speed) roads can function as bikeways with very little physical change or intervention. However, indicating and connecting these bikeways with signage and wayfinding information is an important and relatively low-cost step for improving conditions for cycling. While Tinley Park, Homewood, Olympia Fields, Midlothian, and Park Forest have installed bikeway signage, much of the South Council has not. Designating and properly signing bike routes throughout the South Council can help create an environment in which residents are more comfortable traveling by bicycle throughout the area. The plan update will recommend that improvements be made to bikeway signage and that the South Council and SSMMA consider a Council-wide bikeway signage plan, and provide resources and information on best practices for developing and implementing bikeway signage.

- Commit to improving bicycle parking. Bicycle parking facilities – properly designed, located, and installed – is an important element in encouraging and increasing bicycling for transportation. The plan update will recommend that the South Council and its member communities increase and improve bike parking in the South Council area, and present strategies and present best practices for providing bicycle parking. Possible strategies include bicycle parking ordinances and joint-purchasing agreements for bicycle racks and installation.
- Encourage community, and Council-wide, biking and walking events and support bicycle riding education programs and initiatives. Special events such as community bike rides, "ride your bike to work week "and "walk/ride to school days" should be promoted and, when possible, sponsored by the Council, SSMMA, and its partners, including municipalities, cycling clubs, advocacy groups, chambers of commerce, park districts, and school districts. The Plan will recommend hosting special events that encourage walking and biking for all age groups and levels of mobility.

Identify strategies for future growth that promote walking, biking, and transit usage and secure funding for active transportation and inter-jurisdictional collaboration.

- Focus redevelopment efforts around transit access. The Southland "Green TIME Zone" framework lays out a method for increasing residential densities, diversifying land uses, and designing spaces to facilitate walking and cycling. The plan update will recommend that the South Council and member communities prioritize projects in the TOD areas identified by Green TIME Zone and in other areas near transit.
- Pursue partnerships, grants and alternative funding sources to assist with implementation. To assist with funding the recommendations of the Complete Streets Plan, the South Council should strengthen partnerships and also seek out and apply for available grants and other funding resources. The South Council should look to partner with various groups and jurisdictions including municipalities, school districts, park districts, and the County. Examples of potential grants include the Transportation Alternatives Program, the Illinois Transportation Enhancement program (ITEP) and its sub-programs – namely, Safe Routes to School and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Bike Path Program – the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program, Illinois Highway Safety Program, and the Surface Transportation Program (STP). The Plan will identify potential partnerships and/or funding sources for each recommendation whenever possible.
- The South Council of Mayors recently updated its STP programming methodology to include – as part of its Air Quality/TCM category – a small number of points (4) for projects that accommodate bicyclists. The number of points is, however, relatively small and may not be sufficient to advance Complete Streets goals and objectives. In addition, other criteria currently used in the South Council's evaluation of STP projects may be at odds with or counter to Complete Streets objectives. The Complete Streets and Trails Plan project will include recommendations for strengthening the Council's STP evaluation methodology to more robustly include Complete Streets in funding decisions.
- While four South Council communities, Cook County, and IDOT have adopted Complete Streets policies of one sort or another, implementation of the policies has proven complex and difficult. The project will

identify and engage 3-4 South Council communities in workshop and training events designed to lead directly to the creation of a community-specific, robust Complete Streets policy and policy implementation plan.